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MONARCHY AND THE PEOPLE

1485-1689

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MONARCHY AND THE PEOPLE

CHAPTER I

MONARCHY VERSUS ANARCHY

ON August 22, 1485, Richard III fell fighting at Bosworth. His crown was placed on the head of the victorious Henry Tudor, and the triumphant army hailed their leader as King Henry VII.

There was little in Henry's position to suggest that he was to inaugurate an era of national vigour and progress. The success of his rebellion had been due rather to the defects of Richard and the treachery of Richard's followers than to any merit or skill of his own. Though not so absurd to contemporaries as it seems to us, his title to the throne was of the weakest; and there were still representatives of the House of York who might assert their claims without the handicap of unpopularity that had ruined Richard.

Even less hopeful seemed the prospects of the nation. It had been passing through one of the darkest periods of our history. The long struggle between the Houses of York and Lancaster, reproduced everywhere in the private feuds of the nobility, had crippled the administrative system. The suffering which resulted from the insecurity of life and property was intensified by economic changes. Corn-land was on all sides being turned into pasture, and agricultural labourers were consequently thrown out of employment and often evicted from their holdings. In the prevalent disorder there was no possibility that the widespread distress

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would be remedied by a development in manufacturing industry.

But what made the outlook specially black was the apparent decay of moral and intellectual vigour. The standard of conduct, both public and private, was low : treachery and cruelty are perhaps the qualities most characteristic of the age. The Church, though externally as strong as ever, was corrupt, unprogressive, and unpopular. And as mediæval ideals had lost their power over men's spirits, mediæval problems had lost their interest for men's minds. As yet the Universities had nothing better to offer, nor did the world of politics seem any more fruitful. The attempt of the Lancastrians to rule as constitutional kings had been a dismal failure. Parliament was discredited. The defeats of England in the Hundred Years' War seemed to have robbed the nation of its self-respect. Faction had triumphed over patriotism. And now, utterly weary of strife, the average Englishman was willing to accept any form of government that could restore peace and order.

A century later, with Henry VII's granddaughter on the throne, England presents a very different picture. There are still parties in the nation ; but their disputes turn on questions of religion. There are still economic troubles ; but they are diminishing through the growth of commerce and manufactures. The intellect of the nation has written many pages in the golden book of Elizabethan Literature. English patriotism is enthusiastically defying the strongest power in Europe.

Many factors helped to produce the transformation. But the chief credit belongs to the Tudor sovereigns. When the organisation of a state is unable to adapt itself to changing circumstances, a strong force is needed to hold society together during the transition to a new system. At the close of the Middle Ages England, like other European countries, found this force in the crown. Now it often happens that the strong rule which restores order imposes itself permanently on the nation

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to the destruction of constitutional liberty. But this was not the case in sixteenth-century England; this volume is called, not merely *Monarchy*, but *Monarchy and the People*. The following pages will try to show, firstly, how the House of Tudor raised the nation out of the depths to which it had fallen, and, secondly, how the nation successfully asserted against the Stuarts its right to control its own destinies. Considerations of space will necessitate a strict adherence to the main theme; under-plots and side-issues, however interesting and important, must be ruthlessly ignored.

Henry VII is not one of the great names in English history. Yet the wise Francis Bacon has called him a "wonder for wise men," and subsequent research has not reversed the verdict. It is indeed impossible to like Henry. Cunning and cold, he could plan and execute black crimes with a deliberation that makes them peculiarly repulsive. But with all his defects he was the very king for the times. He was determined to rule, and the nation wanted a ruler. He could subordinate passion to policy, and it was passion that had brought England to the verge of ruin. He was cautious and parsimonious, and peace and retrenchment were what England most needed. He was no doubt actuated by regard for the interests of himself and his crown; but at the end of the fifteenth century these were also the interests of the nation.

Henry's first task was to secure his own position. As representative of the House of Lancaster he had to face the hostility of the House of York; as king he was confronted by the insubordination of the nobility. Both difficulties were skilfully overcome. Henry's merciful treatment of the defeated Yorkists soon reconciled most of them to his rule, while his marriage with Edward IV's daughter Elizabeth gave a pretext for submission to those who stood for the principle of hereditary right. Troublés of course there were, but

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one or two risings were nipped in the bud, and two impostors who, with foreign aid, impersonated Yorkist princes were destroyed with ease as soon as they ventured into England. As occasion demanded, dangerous Yorkists and their supporters were imprisoned, exiled, or executed. Against aristocratic turbulence Henry also took successful action. Statutes against the keeping of armed retainers were sternly enforced; and for the trial of powerful offenders against law and order Parliament established a new court of justice consisting of high officers of state and privy councillors—men above the influence of fear or corruption. Under its later name of the Court of Star Chamber this tribunal has left behind it an evil reputation, but at first it was a beneficent engine of justice.

Not content with healing the ills of the state, Henry sought to infuse into it new vigour. Of special moment is his foreign and commercial policy. The nation was too much exhausted to stand a big war, and Henry's nature was averse from expensive risks. But striking results were achieved by Henry's skill in the unscrupulous diplomacy which now rivalled military prowess in its influence on international politics. With admirable prescience Henry grasped that Spain was the power of the immediate future; the Prince of Wales was married to the Princess Katharine of Aragon, and on his early death the young widow was betrothed to the king's second son Henry. Of equal consequence was the match concluded between the Princess Margaret and James IV of Scotland. So well, in fact, did Henry play his cards that by the end of the reign the friendship of England was eagerly sought by continental states, and the self-respect of the English had begun to revive.

Though the restoration of internal peace was itself enough to stimulate trade, Henry fanned the smoking flax by protective legislation, navigation laws, and commercial treaties with our chief foreign customers. The growth of mercantile enterprise was illustrated when

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John Cabot sailed with the first English expedition to America; and the reign is marked by a general expansion of home and foreign trade which, continuing throughout the Tudor period, did more than anything else to solve the crying economic problems of the time.

There was inevitably a dark side to Henry's rule. Parliament was at first subservient, and afterwards neglected. In money matters Henry was unscrupulous and tyrannical. Forced loans were wrung from the wealthy, and the reign has gained notoriety through the ingenious methods of extortion practised by the king's great minister, Cardinal Morton, and by his later agents, Empson and Dudley. But there is no need to dwell on the unpleasant features of Henry's policy. The good that he did lived after him: the evil was mostly interred with his bones. The value of his work is best shown by what the nation accomplished and endured under his son.

When Henry VIII became king he was greeted with delight as the antithesis of his unattractive father. With his zeal for military glory, passion for sport, interest in letters and the fine arts, love of pomp and pageantry, weakness for sensual indulgence, and apparent contempt for the business of state, the new king seemed to have drawn his nature from his grandfather, Edward IV, and to have nothing of Henry VII in his composition. But there was another side to his character—a side which became more and more conspicuous as Henry grew older. He had inherited his father's forceful personality, capacity for application, and, above all, his skill in adjusting means to ends. And it is on these qualities that his fame rests.

At first, however, the great despot and statesman was obscured by the dashing young gallant. For nearly half the reign it seemed to contemporaries that the real ruler of England was not Henry but Thomas Wolsey, Chancellor, Cardinal, Archbishop of York, and holder of lesser dignities without end.

Wolsey is one of the famous men of our history.

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His undistinguished origin, his brilliant career at Oxford, his rapid rise in the diplomatic service, his unprecedented power and magnificence, his sudden ruin, have all united to give him a reputation greater than he deserves. Despite his admirable zeal, address, and insight, his activity bore little fruit. Wolsey's fame rests mainly on his handling of foreign affairs, and it is true that he steered England safely through dangers incurred by the headstrong young king, extricated her without loss from two unnecessary wars, and enabled her to play a part in international diplomacy to which her intrinsic strength by no means entitled her. But when his fine-spun intrigues were all broken by his master, it is questionable whether the position of England was really stronger than before his rise to power.

Wolsey's domestic policy was equally futile. His schemes for dealing with social distress came to nothing. His projected reform of the Church led only to the suppression of a few small monasteries, and as the Cardinal himself was an embodiment of some of the worst ecclesiastical abuses, it is open to doubt whether he would ever have gone much further.

In spite of Henry's comparative obscurity for many years, it is clear that Wolsey's power was always dependent on his support, and that when the two differed it was usually Henry who had his way. It must be noted also that Henry took the credit for Wolsey's successes, while everything unpopular or unfortunate was set down against the Cardinal. Wolsey had scarce a friend in the country. He was hated by the nobles as an upstart, by the landlords as a demagogue, by the poor as a hypocrite, and by the laity in general as the official leader of the clergy and a bulwark of ecclesiastical privilege. But of all the mud that was thrown at Wolsey very little reached the king. If war with France necessitated heavy taxation, it was Wolsey who had to face the angry Parliament; and when in 1525 the nation refused to raise a large loan, Henry gained

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much glory by interposing to save his people from his minister's rapacity. The king in fact retained much of his early popularity, while he was gaining experience from Wolsey's mistakes.

If we look only at the features which most impressed contemporaries, the first half of Henry's reign seems a barren time. But a wider survey shows that the nation was progressing rapidly through its convalescence. The nobility were easily held in check. National pride was stimulated by Henry's wars, unnecessary and fruitless though they were. But the most significant feature of these years was the rapid advance of the Renaissance or Revival of Learning. This wonderful movement began in Italy with the renewal of interest in the long neglected art and literature of the ancient world. Enthusiasm for antiquity naturally led to criticism of the systems of thought and methods of education that had been authoritative in the Middle Ages. At the beginning of the sixteenth century all established ideas were in the melting-pot. Science was becoming revolutionised by the geographical discoveries of Columbus and the astronomical researches of Copernicus. Political axioms were being overthrown by the study of Greek and Roman history and institutions. Above all, the teachings of the Church were undergoing keen and destructive criticism. Thanks to the invention of the printing-press the new spirit was spreading its influence far and wide.

Throughout the fifteenth century the Renaissance was a growing force in southern Europe ; but it was not till the days of Henry VII that it struck firm root in England. The king, and still more his mother Margaret Beaufort, showed a practical if not very intelligent sympathy with the new ideas, and to their munificence must be given some of the credit for the marked revival of fruitful activity at the Universities. After the accession of Henry VIII the movement spread fast. At first the effect was seen in brilliant political speculations, like the *Utopia* of Sir Thomas More, or in denuncia-

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tions of ecclesiastical abuses. But the spirit of the Renaissance asked the why and wherefore of everything, and it was inevitable that the very foundations of the Church should be attacked in England as elsewhere. The clergy, indeed, with a few notable exceptions, showed bitter hostility to the New Learning. They were in fact the chief obstacle to progress when in 1527 Henry entered on a course of action which was to end in religious revolution.

CHAPTER II

THE REFORMATION

IN 1527 it became known that Henry wished to be divorced from his wife, Katharine of Aragon. The king declared that "his marriage had crept too nigh his conscience." Katharine was his brother's widow, and therefore within the prohibited degrees. True, the pope had granted a dispensation to render the marriage legal. But was the papal power competent to do this? And even if in general it was, were there not special circumstances which made the validity of this particular dispensation highly doubtful? Moreover, only one of Katharine's children, and that a girl, had survived infancy. It was clear that the curse of God rested on the unhallowed union.

Katharine's friends scoffed. The truth was that the king's conscience "had crept too nigh another lady." It was Henry's passion for Anne Boleyn, one of the court beauties, that had made his moral sense so unusually acute.

Henry's conscience deserved no mercy. But his sham scruples were not solely due to his infatuation for Anne. The leading motive must rather be sought in his desire for a male heir. It was generally expected that the accession of a woman would be followed by disorder, and even if she managed to maintain her authority, the question of her marriage would give rise to almost insuperable difficulties. That Henry's apprehensions were not groundless is shown by the later troubles of his daughter Mary and by the extinction of his line at the death of the virgin-queen Elizabeth.

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On the other hand, a male heir would probably succeed unchallenged, and here too events confirmed his judgment. To Henry, naturally concerned for the future prosperity of his house, a legitimate son seemed an object for which the greatest risks might be justified. Of course, when once he was determined to marry again, his passion for Anne suggested her as a suitable queen ; and it is conceivable that he really did come to believe that his union with Katharine was under a curse. But Anne and his conscience were only secondary causes of the unexpected sequel.

The law of the Church knew of no divorce in our sense of the term. Henry, however, expected that Pope Clement VII would easily be persuaded to declare the marriage invalid from the first. There were many precedents for such a pronouncement, and it chanced that Clement was at the moment anxious to secure Henry's support against the Emperor Charles V. But just after Henry had revealed his intentions, news reached England that Rome had been sacked by Charles's troops and that the pope was a prisoner. From Henry's standpoint nothing worse could have happened ; for Katharine was Charles's aunt, and he set great store on her influence at the English court.

But Henry had gone too far to draw back. The next year was spent in trying to win over the pope. Persuasion was tried, promises, threats. But the influence of Charles and Clement's reluctance to denounce an act of one of his predecessors foiled all the devices of the English envoys. When at length the pope found himself free he would do no more than appoint a commission to try the case.

The commissioners were Cardinal Campeggio, who was well known in England, and Wolsey. The latter thought Henry unwise in offending the Emperor, and Anne Boleyn was one of his worst enemies. Her influence indeed had already impaired Henry's confidence in his minister. Aware of this, and taught by experience that, however much he might dislike Henry's

policy, it would be fatal to oppose it, Wolsey was anxious to secure his future by some signal service on the commission. But here he was thwarted by the pope. Political considerations urged Clement to postpone a definite pronouncement, and Campeggio was instructed to waste as much time as he could. The wily Italian entered fully into the spirit of his master's policy, and it was not till June 1529 that the commission held its first sitting. Katharine indignantly refused to acknowledge the competence of the tribunal, and appealed to Clement himself. Nevertheless the commissioners proceeded to hear evidence on both sides, and from the attitude of Wolsey everyone anticipated a judgment agreeable to the king. First, however, Campeggio insisted on adjourning the court for the long vacation; and before the king's wrath had cooled he learned that the pope had called the case to Rome and cited both parties to appear in person.

Tricked and insulted, Henry boiled over with indignation against the pope and his two commissioners. His vengeance soon fell on the innocent Wolsey, whose powers as papal legate and Cardinal were declared to have trenched on the king's authority, and therefore to have involved him in an offence against the Statute of *Præmunire*. The charge was absurd; but Wolsey's knowledge of the king counselled him to make an abject submission. For a time he was allowed to retire to his Archbishopric of York; but there his zeal in the performance of his spiritual functions soon won him a popularity which aroused the jealous alarm of Henry; and after a few months he was summoned to London to answer a charge of treason. On the way he fell grievously sick, and died at Leicester Abbey, protesting at the last his devotion to his ungrateful sovereign.

The ruin of Wolsey might gratify the king and impress the nation with a wholesome dread of his power, but it did nothing towards setting him free from Katharine. Henry, however, was already working on two different lines towards the attainment of his end.

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It was of course out of the question that a King of England should go as a suitor to Rome. But a Cambridge don, by name Thomas Cranmer, had persuaded Henry that if he could get the support of the Universities of Europe he might ignore the pope altogether. During 1530 English envoys scoured the Continent, collecting the opinions of the learned on the validity of Henry's marriage. The result, however, was unsatisfactory. Universities in the territories of Charles were for Katharine; those under the influence of Charles's enemies, against her. Henry had henceforth to rely on the second string to his bow—the English Parliament.

In spite of his dealings with the Universities, Henry was loth to break with the pope. From 1529 to 1532 his aim was to frighten Clement into compliance. The anti-clerical spirit of the nation was to be used for an attack on the privileges of the clergy and the rights of the papacy. Clement was to see that Henry had the people behind him.

The Parliament which was to be Henry's weapon first met in the autumn of 1529. Royal influence had been freely exerted to secure the return of suitable members, but even without it there would have been little protest against Henry's first shots at the pope—acts against non-resident clergy and the extortionate fees levied for the performance of clerical duties. Then followed a pause while Henry noted the effect on Clement. As the pope remained obdurate, Henry returned to the attack. In 1531 all the English clergy were accused of an offence against the Statute of *Præmunire* for acknowledging Wolsey's authority as legate. No more unreasonable charge could have been conceived. But the clergy, afraid of more legislation against them, bought the king's pardon by a large grant of money and by recognising him as "sole protector and supreme head of the Church and clergy in England." Next year Parliament cut off one of the chief sources of papal revenue, and the clergy were made to admit that the laws of the Church were invalid

unless the king had agreed to them. But even these blows failed to move the obstinate Clement, and Henry at last resolved on open defiance. If the pope would not give him what he wanted, he would take it himself.

In the summer of 1532 the see of Canterbury fell vacant. The king's influence secured the election of Cranmer, who, despite the failure of the appeal to the Universities, was high in Henry's favour; and with great cunning the pope was lured into confirming the appointment. By the time that Cranmer's position was secure, Parliament had passed an Act forbidding appeals to Rome. The new primate at once went through the formality of trying Henry's suit, and speedily pronounced in his favour. Anne, already secretly married to Henry, was crowned, and soon afterwards she gave birth to a daughter, the future Queen Elizabeth.

Henry had reached the goal towards which all his actions had for six years been directed. But there was no stopping at the point reached. He had defied the papacy, and an irrevocable breach was the only alternative to a complete surrender. Without hesitation Henry began to cut the last strands that bound England to Rome. It was a daring move. Not only would it make Henry an outlaw among the sovereigns of Europe, but his rebellion against the head of Christendom was regarded with horror by numbers of his own subjects. These, then, must be destroyed or terrified, so that if foreign intervention should be attempted, it would receive no aid from internal discontent.

The year 1534 accordingly saw the passing of the Act of Succession and the Act of Supremacy. The first declared that the issue of Anne Boleyn should succeed to the throne, and demanded from all Englishmen an oath of obedience to the measure. The Act of Supremacy gave to the king the title of Supreme Head of the Church, with all the power and authority appertaining to that dignity. What that "power and authority" involved no one knew, and the question was never clearly answered. But it was this very vagueness that

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made the Act so dangerous, especially in conjunction with another measure passed at this time, which made it treason to deny the king's right to any of his titles.

Considering the nature of the revolution that Henry was effecting, he had wonderfully little trouble with his subjects. Several Carthusian monks paid the penalty for refusing to recognise the king's new title ; and a great impression was made by the execution in 1535 of Bishop Fisher and Sir Thomas More. Both were eminent for piety, learning, and political wisdom. Both had been personal friends of the king. Both were fully alive to the existence of ecclesiastical corruption. But as devoted Catholics, they could lend no countenance to Henry's revolt against Rome, and their fate was sealed by their steadfast refusal to take the oath of succession and to acknowledge Henry as Supreme Head of the Church. Their courage, however, produced little effect, for few Englishmen thought the pope worth dying for. On the other hand, Henry's determination to brook no resistance made him more feared than ever.

Hitherto Henry had gained little but trouble and danger from his quarrel with Rome. After 1535, however, his enterprise began to pay. It is during the next few years that we can most clearly trace the influence of Thomas Cromwell. Cromwell, a man of obscure birth, had been a soldier, a money-lender, a lawyer, but it was as an able servant of Wolsey that he had first won Henry's notice. While always loyal to the Cardinal, he had managed to conciliate his master's enemies ; and after Wolsey's death he was treated with ever-increasing confidence by the king. Thoroughly unscrupulous, and a bitter enemy of the clergy, he was the very counsellor that Henry wanted. His advice had probably precipitated the final breach with Rome, and it was almost certainly he who now drew Henry's attention to the advantages that might be gained from an attack on the monasteries. As a class, the monks were hostile to Henry's anti-papal policy. If they were punished by the loss of their pro-

perty, the crown would be enriched, enthusiasm for Henry might be aroused by a decrease in taxation, and judicious gifts might create a party bound by material ties to the new order. A pretext lay ready in the notorious corruption of many monasteries.

Given a free hand by the king, Cromwell instituted an inquiry into the religious houses. In seven months his agents rushed over England, and then presented a report full of astounding and revolting evidence. A bill for the suppression of 370 of the smaller monasteries was introduced into Parliament. Cromwell's report secured its passage: two thousand monks and nuns became homeless, and property of immense value passed into the king's hand.

From the moral standpoint the suppression was an act of naked injustice. The haste of Cromwell's commissioners is enough to prove that no attempt at a judicial inquiry was made. Henry and Cromwell indeed admitted as much by dissolving not only the houses condemned in the report but also those acquitted or overlooked. But it does not follow that the disappearance of the monasteries was a calamity for the nation. Apart from Cromwell's inquiry, there is abundant evidence not only that monasticism was riddled with abuses, but that in many respects it was a serious drag on general progress. The monks were the arch-enemies of the Renaissance, and their much-lauded charity pauperised the least deserving elements of the population. Public opinion in most parts accepted the suppression with significant coolness.

Royal greed soon found an excuse for devouring the monasteries that remained. In the north the monks had retained some of their primitive virtue and popularity. Their misfortunes excited a rebellion in Yorkshire and the neighbouring counties. This rising—known as the Pilgrimage of Grace—took the form of a crusade against the recent developments of Henry's policy. In the forefront of their demands the rebels placed the restoration of the abbeys and the banish-

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ment of Cromwell. Henry's fair promises, however, induced them to disperse, only to learn that a king's word is soon broken and a king's vengeance severe.

A number of abbots had been concerned in the Pilgrimage. It was now laid down that if an abbot committed treason, his house was *ipso facto* dissolved. The principle was applied in all parts of the country. Abbots were found guilty of seditious talk or of concealing property from Cromwell's commissioners. Three were executed. Others were frightened, cajoled, or bribed into handing over their monasteries to Henry. In 1540 the last surviving abbey, that of Waltham, surrendered. An Act of Parliament had already confirmed the king in the possession of the forfeited property.

Many of the monastic estates were given away. Others were sold, generally for less than their just value. Of the revenue obtained some went to the establishment of new bishoprics, some was spent on the navy, most was swallowed up by Henry's later wars. But the promised endowment of education was disgracefully neglected, and taxation remained as heavy as before.

It must be borne in mind that the changes hitherto noticed concerned only the government and organisation of the Church. In themselves they made no difference to worship or belief. Henry wished to expel papal influence from England, and to bring the clergy into complete dependence on the crown; but he had no quarrel with the Catholic system of theology. And this attitude was approved by the majority of the nation.

There was, however, a strong party in full sympathy with the Protestant reformation, which since 1517 had been turning the Continent upside down. As early as 1521 the new theology was accepted by several well-known scholars at Cambridge, Cranmer among them; and despite the hostility of Henry, who had already signalised his orthodoxy by a book against Luther, reformed opinions made steady progress. Encouraged by

the growing estrangement between Henry and Rome, the advance of Protestantism was accelerated while the divorce suit was pending, and became very rapid after 1533. Queen Anne was inclined to favour the reformers; Archbishop Cranmer was a sincere if somewhat timid Protestant; and Chief Secretary Cromwell, though a man of no religious convictions, sympathised with the negative side of the reformation, and recognised in the Protestants valuable allies in his attack on the Church. By 1536 there were five Protestant bishops.

That year saw the execution of Anne Boleyn on an ill-founded charge of infidelity; but her place was soon taken by Jane Seymour, whose zeal for reform was still greater. Shortly afterwards an authoritative pronouncement on doctrine, drawn up by Henry and accepted by the clergy, made some important concessions to the reformers. In the following years there came the final assault on the monasteries; an inspection of miraculous relics and images led to the discovery of sensational frauds; several famous shrines were despoiled of their treasures, and the clergy were enjoined to discourage pilgrimages. It was ordered that a Bible should be placed in every church for public use, and the year 1537 saw the publication of the first Authorised Version in English. Everything seemed to presage a complete and speedy triumph of Protestantism.

But suddenly the onward march of the reformers was checked by the king. For once he had allowed a minister to carry him further than he really wished; it was time to assert his authority. Catholicism without the pope remained his ideal, and he clung to it the more as Protestantism was still generally unpopular. Changes in the services, the destruction of shrines and images, outraged the feelings of thousands who had been left cold by the repudiation of papal authority and the suppression of the monasteries. Internal harmony was essential in face of the efforts of the pope

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to organise a European crusade against England, and internal harmony might best be secured by conciliating the religious prejudices of the bulk of the nation.

Accordingly in 1539 the Statute of Six Articles, passed by both Parliament and Convocation, fell like a thunderbolt on the Protestants. It was heresy to deny transubstantiation, felony to denounce the confessional and clerical celibacy; everyone must go to confession and mass. The reformers had lost not only freedom of speech, but freedom of conscience.

The passing of the statute had as its natural sequel the fall of Cromwell. His luck was out. Just when royal favour was beginning to leave him, he had arranged a marriage between Henry, for once a widower from natural causes, and Anne of Cleves, a German princess of some diplomatic significance. The bride proved ugly and otherwise unattractive. Her defects were visited on Cromwell. Accused of favouring heresy and betraying the king's interests, he was sentenced to death by Act of Parliament and executed without trial.

Anne of Cleves was soon divorced. Her successor, Katharine Howard, was the niece of the Duke of Norfolk, one of the leaders of the Catholics. For some time the Statute of Six Articles was enforced with vigour, and the whole nation was in terror of the king. At the close of 1540 the cause of reform seemed in a sad plight indeed.

The reaction, however, was short-lived. Till the end of the reign, it is true, the Six Articles remained in force, and the last year of Henry's life was marked by a sharp persecution. But on the whole Protestantism continued to make progress. There was no systematic attempt to root it out. Despite the machinations of the Catholics, Cranmer kept his archbishopric, and retaining as he always did the king's favour and trust, was able to protect the heretics and prevent conservative zealots from going beyond the statute of 1539. And as time went on, circumstances once more favoured the reform party. Katharine Howard was proved

guilty of infidelity and executed. The fame of the next queen, Katharine Parr, rests chiefly on the fact that she survived her husband, but such influence as she exerted was cast on the side of Protestantism. Henry, moreover, became involved in war with Scotland and France; the expense of the operations revived his interest in the purification of the Church; and an Act was passed for the suppression of all chantries and religious colleges. A further effect of the wars was the rise to influence of two Protestants in the Earl of Hertford, brother of Jane Seymour, and Viscount Lisle, the son of Henry VII's extortioner Dudley. They had just driven the Catholic leaders from the royal council when in 1547 came the unexpected death of the king.

In a brief sketch it is difficult to do justice to the character and abilities of Henry VIII. He was a bad man, sensual, selfish, cynical, and brutal. But he was a great king. There is something magnificent about his very crimes. It cannot be said that he failed in anything he undertook, and he ran greater risks than any other king in English history. He defied the mightiest potentates of his time; he laid hands on the most venerable institution in his country, and violated the most cherished beliefs of thousands of his own subjects; he beheaded, plundered, and bullied as and when the fancy seized him. And yet at his death England was stronger and better governed than it was at his accession; and, wonderful though it be, the nation at large was proud of him, and, as "bluff King Hal," held him in admiring remembrance.

Henry's death came at an opportune moment for Protestantism. The reformers held a majority on the council he had nominated to govern for the son of Jane Seymour, who now, at the age of nine, became King Edward VI. Their influence was at once felt in the choice of Hertford, soon to become Duke of Somerset, as protector of the realm.

In moral character Somerset stands among the most respectable of sixteenth-century statesmen. He was

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a sincere supporter of both religious and social reform. Unfortunately he was avaricious—a fault which exposed him to the charge of self-seeking; and, what was more serious, he was unpractical and tactless. The last weakness was conspicuous in his efforts to realise Henry's ambition of arranging a match between Edward and the little Queen of Scots. Though it led to military successes, Somerset's trust in fire and sword defeated his own ends, for it drove the Scots to send Queen Mary to France and thus strengthened the bonds between England's chief enemies.

More wisdom marked Somerset's religious policy. After Henry's death the Government ceased to uphold Catholic doctrine, and the laws against heresy, including the Statute of Six Articles, were repealed in Edward's first Parliament. Anxious, however, to gauge the feeling of the nation, the council at first adopted what was almost an attitude of toleration. But this led to utter confusion. Service in one parish might be Catholic, in the next Lutheran, in the next neither. English Protestantism, in fact, was no longer united. There were moderate men like Cranmer whose views were subsequently embodied in the reformed Church of England. There were Lutherans, equally cautious on different lines; and there were radical Zwinglians and Calvinists, not to mention fanatical sects without end. The air was rent by theological controversy of incredible bitterness and scurrility. If only in the interests of peace and order, an authoritative settlement was imperative.

In numbers the Catholics had an overwhelming superiority; but this advantage was nullified by the greater enthusiasm and energy of the Protestants. This balance of parties lent itself to the moderate aims of Somerset, and the settlement adopted was naturally a compromise.

Cranmer had just finished compiling a new service-book. After slight amendment in a conservative direction, his work was accepted by Parliament, and

early in 1549 the first Act of Uniformity enjoined on all clergy the use of the first Book of Common Prayer.

The government and organisation of the Church remained as Henry had left them, and this was pleasing to the Catholics. But in theology, as in its regulations for worship, the book was an attempt to conciliate all the important parties. Catholics might derive comfort from the continued sanction of a stately ceremonial and of elaborate ornaments and vestments. Protestants, on the other hand, would note with relief that the services were to be in the vernacular, and that, though the book left room for much ritual, it enjoined little. But like most attempts at compromise in a time of strong feeling, the new services aroused general dissatisfaction. Before long the Catholics of Devon and Cornwall broke into open rebellion.

Somerset's merciful nature shrank from stern measures; but his colleagues raised a force which soon put down the rising. Simultaneously, however, the Protector's difficulties were more than doubled by another revolt in Norfolk. This movement had nothing to do with the Prayer-book, but owed its origin to those social grievances which Henry VII and Wolsey had in vain tried to remedy. Commerce and manufactures were indeed developing, but not fast enough to provide employment for all those thrown out of work by the abandonment of agriculture for sheep-rearing. Somerset, always sympathetic with the poor, had appointed a commission to inquire into the illegal conversion of corn-land into pasture. But thwarted at every turn by the landlords, the inquiry proved fruitless; and the disappointment of the peasants found vent in widespread disorder. In Norfolk it came to organised rebellion under the leadership of a well-to-do tanner named Robert Ket. The discipline and restraint of Ket's followers increased Somerset's aversion to violent reprisals; again his colleagues had to act without him, and the movement was quelled by Lisle, now Earl of Warwick, who for some time had been trying to undermine the Pro-

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tector's position. The victorious general seized the favourable moment; Somerset was driven from the Protectorship; and for the rest of the reign Warwick controlled the destinies of the country.

The Duke of Northumberland, to give Warwick his later and better-known title, was a Thomas Cromwell without that statesman's few virtues and many talents. His support of the reformation was based on self-interest, and he made no effort to conceal his insincerity and lack of scruple. One by one his opponents were removed from the council, and an attempt by Somerset to recover his ascendancy brought him to the block. As for the Church, it was oppressed without mercy. Several bishops of Catholic views were imprisoned, two sees altogether suppressed, and many other episcopal estates seized for the benefit of Northumberland and his creatures. It served Northumberland's turn to support the demands for further reform, and in 1552 a second Act of Uniformity introduced a revised Prayer-book, which, though falling short of the wishes of extremists, was distinctly Protestant in character. Northumberland's interest in the change was explained by the appointment of commissioners to remove from the churches all ornaments which the new book rendered superfluous. All articles of value, sometimes the very church bells, were seized by these rapacious brigands.

Henry VIII had done things as bad, but he had a regard for public opinion which Northumberland lacked. Northumberland's rule, too, was utterly incapable. Disorder was rife at home, and England fell into contempt abroad. Protestantism was not popular in itself, and it was now associated in the mind of the nation with injustice, incompetence, and disgrace.

The death of the king in 1553 brought his minister's headlong career to an abrupt end. Northumberland indeed tried to prolong his power by inducing Edward to bequeath the crown to his daughter-in-law, Lady Jane Grey, a descendant of Henry VII. But the daring scheme failed hopelessly. On every ground

Henry VIII's elder daughter Mary was rightful heir, and on Edward's death no one was willing to support Jane. On the contrary, the home counties rose for Mary, and her speedy triumph was followed by the consignment of Northumberland to the Tower.

CHAPTER III

THE ROMANIST REACTION

MARY's accession was received with general rejoicing. The nation had had enough of Seymours and Dudleys, and was glad to be once more governed by a Tudor. It was felt, moreover, that amends were due to Mary for the contempt and neglect she had long experienced from her father and for the restraint and annoyance to which she had been subjected by Northumberland. Her devotion to the Roman faith was also in her favour, for Protestantism had overdrawn its credit with the nation, and public opinion wished to make it pay.

In private character Mary was the best of the Tudor sovereigns. She was sincerely religious and devoted to principle. It is indeed a hard fate that has made her the only Tudor with whom a bad epithet is popularly associated. But it was Mary's lot to rule England at a time when her best qualities inevitably led to hideous results.

That Mary was not by nature "bloody" was shown by her treatment of Northumberland's plot. The duke himself deserved and received no mercy, but of his accomplices only two were put to death and many went altogether unpunished. With her popularity enhanced by her leniency, the queen turned her mind to the realisation of three ends on which she had set her heart. Firstly, she must marry. Secondly, the realm must be restored to union with Rome. Thirdly, heresy must be stamped out.

Before long the nation learned that negotiations were on foot for the marriage of the queen to Philip, son of

the Emperor Charles, and heir to the throne of Spain. Half a Spaniard herself, Mary was the more eager for the match that Spain was the chief upholder of Catholicism. But Englishmen generally regarded the project with distrust; proud of their national independence since the exploits of Henry VIII, they feared that English interests would be sacrificed in support of Spain's continental ambitions. The intensity of this feeling was shown by several risings, one of which, under Sir Thomas Wyatt, came nearer success than any other rebellion in Tudor times. But its chief result was the execution of Lady Jane Grey, the queen fearing that she would be a focus of sedition as long as she lived. With true Tudor tenacity Mary kept to her purpose and married Philip.

In the meantime religious reaction was proceeding apace. The Acts of Uniformity were repealed by Mary's first Parliament, and the revival of Catholic worship and institutions was encouraged by the Government. The queen's accession had been followed by a stampede of Protestant divines to the Continent, and of those who stood their ground the most notable were imprisoned. Vacant sees were given to Catholics.

Mary's aim was to undo every change that had been made since the beginning of the divorce suit; she wished, in fact, to restore the mediæval relations between Church and State. So sweeping a reaction was certainly not desired by the majority of her subjects. The average Englishman was proud of Henry VIII's rebellion against the pope, and had no wish to return under the yoke of an Italian bishop. Nevertheless, the general desire to please the queen disposed the nation to waive its objection.

But in the way of Mary's complete success there was a still more serious obstacle. What was to become of the confiscated property of the Church—in particular the monastic lands? Mary's intention to restore everything to its original owners was met by the unyielding resistance of those who were enjoying the plunder.

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Henry had created a vested interest in the new order, and when reaction was in full flood, this alone stood firm. Cardinal Pole, the pope's envoy, was at last driven to agree that property seized by Act of Parliament need not be given back. Only then would the Houses agree to recognise the papal supremacy, and admit Pole to pronounce the reconciliation of England and the Church of Rome.

About the same time the revival of the laws against heresy put Mary in a position to attempt the extirpation of Protestantism. With the help and encouragement of Pole, now Archbishop of Canterbury, she soon initiated a bitter persecution. Early in 1555 the burnings began. John Rogers, a well-known Protestant divine, "broke the ice." Within six months he was followed by fifty victims, and later in the year by Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley, both bishops and among the most illustrious leaders of English Protestantism. The persecution continued till the end of the reign, by which time some three hundred Protestants, mostly from London and the south-east, had met their fate. In 1556 Cranmer himself came to his end. Mary knew no mercy for the man whose sentence had divorced her mother, but her vengeance was deferred in the hope that by some notable act of apostasy this arch-heretic might bring discredit on his own cause. Mary's plan almost succeeded. Apart from his constitutional timidity, Cranmer was in a real quandary when Mary became queen. He was a Protestant; he was also a believer in the divine right of the sovereign to determine the religion of his subjects. Hitherto both views had generally been compatible; now there was a collision, and Cranmer wavered. In his perplexity and fear he put his name to two miserable recantations of all he had striven for during the past twenty years. But when, despite his surrender, he was led forth to death, his conscience triumphed. His last speech was a defiant vindication of Protestantism; and when brought to the stake, he straightway thrust into the

flame the hand which had signed his disgrace, determined that the offending member should be the first to perish.

Never did the blood of martyrs bear more fruit for their cause. Up to this time Protestantism had to most Englishmen been synonymous with greed and injustice. Now it was evidently something worth dying for. Cranmer's defiant end, Latimer's jest at the stake, the patient endurance of scores of unheroic men and women, evoked the admiration which is never denied to courage. Admiration was reinforced by pity. The average Englishman might dislike Protestantism, but he had no wish to see friends and neighbours burned for clinging to a religion which he himself had accepted under Edward VI, and which he would be prepared to accept again if the times altered. He had never expected anything like this when Parliament revived the heresy laws. Henry VIII and Northumberland had been mercy itself in comparison with the present tyranny. The change was clearly the effect of papal supremacy. If the choice lay between Protestantism and Rome, he would certainly choose Protestantism.

As the devoted servant of the papacy, Mary came in for general execration, and the complete loss of her popularity was accelerated by the results of her marriage. Philip's contempt for English interests kindled a hatred of Spain which culminated when his unbounded influence over Mary drew her into the war which he was waging against France. To England the conflict brought nothing but calamity. The French took Calais. Soldiers and sailors were mutinous and fought badly. Financial disaster began to threaten. A general feeling of hopelessness prevailed, for the Government and the nation were utterly out of sympathy. Some great catastrophe seemed inevitable, when towards the end of 1558 Mary died, worn out by anxiety and disappointment. Her death, like her accession, was received with public rejoicing.

CHAPTER IV

THE ELIZABETHAN SETTLEMENT

At the death of Mary it looked as if the house of Tudor had been a failure. The state of the country seemed little better than it was in 1485. Even the succession to the throne was uncertain. By Act of Parliament the rightful queen was Elizabeth. But Romanists regarded Anne Boleyn's daughter as illegitimate, and preferred the claim of Mary Queen of Scots, the granddaughter of Henry VIII's sister Margaret.

The prospect, however, would have appeared less black if more had been known about Elizabeth's character. The new queen was a thorough Tudor. At times her cunning, restraint, and meanness make her seem like a re-incarnation of Henry VII. But her general dignity and occasional daring, her insight into national feeling and power of evoking popular enthusiasm, remind us how much she owed to her father. Her religious belief was as elastic as her code of morality; her outlook and interests were, in fact, distinctly secular. It is a sad reflection that the unscrupulous and worldly Elizabeth was far better fitted to rule England than her single-minded and devout sister.

The queen had a vast admiration for her father, and fully understood the causes of his success. Recent disaster and disaffection had been due to the fact that since 1547 a series of minorities had been able to impose their wills on the nation. Now Henry had generally carried the majority of his subjects with him, and consequently England emerged from the ordeal of his reign with increased strength. It was, therefore, Eliza-

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beth's leading aim to restore internal harmony and sympathy between governor and governed. The first step must be the settlement of religion.

Three courses were open to a practical statesman. Mary's policy might be continued. But the nation at large hated the pope, and it was by no means certain that convinced Romanists would in any event recognise Elizabeth. Secondly, a return to Henry VIII's "middle way" was possible. Elizabeth, it seems, at one time favoured this solution, and it would have been acceptable to the majority of her subjects. But it would have encountered the hostility of the enthusiasts on each side, of all, in fact, who mattered most. There remained the possibility of a return to the days of Edward VI. At first sight such a policy might seem singularly unpromising. But the Prayer-book of 1552 would win the support of the convinced Protestants, and as for the mass of the waverers and indifferent, they might be expected to follow the lead of the crown. After all, much had happened in the last five years. Northumberland's excesses had been forgotten in admiration for the Protestant martyrs. Very advanced views had gained a hold in Scotland, and had increased their influence among the English reformers. What was extreme radicalism in 1552 might therefore seem moderate compromise now.

Elizabeth was in no hurry with her decision. As in the two previous reigns, there was a pause while the new sovereign gauged public opinion. Then, however, the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity were drafted, and with some modifications accepted by Parliament. The effect of the two measures was to set up a Church which was in all except minor details the same as the present Church of England. The Act of Supremacy denied the pope's right to any authority within the queen's dominions, and declared all ecclesiastical jurisdiction to be annexed to the crown. It further enacted that, among others, all the clergy, all holders of military and civil office, and all University graduates should

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take an oath repudiating papal jurisdiction in England and acknowledging the queen as supreme governor of the Church. The abandonment of the title of Supreme Head was a concession to Catholic susceptibilities; but its practical significance was small.

The Act of Uniformity restored the Prayer-book of 1552, with a few changes of a conservative tendency, as the sole authority for the conduct of public worship. No mercy was shown to tender consciences. Everyone was to go regularly to his parish church, on pain of a shilling fine whenever he missed a Sunday.

At first it looked as if the Acts were to be enforced to the letter. The oath of Supremacy was rigorously demanded of the clergy. All the bishops save one, many of the cathedral clergy, and several hundred parish priests refused to take it, and were deprived. The vacancies were filled by Protestants, mostly men of strong views.

But having shown its readiness and power to adopt a stern attitude, the Government contented itself with more lenient courses. The oath was not strictly exacted from the laity specified in the Act. Still less was it attempted to enforce a rigid observance of the Act of Uniformity. Both Romanists and Protestants neglected the Prayer-book without unpleasant consequences, and the fines for non-attendance at church were seldom collected. It was not weakness but policy that led the authorities to this attitude. Scarcely anyone thought the settlement the best, but few had objections so strong as to justify open resistance. The pope had neither denounced the queen nor condemned the Prayer-book, and to Romanists it seemed better to bear present ills than by active hostility to provoke worse evils. As for the extreme Protestants, they might dislike the rules about vestments and ceremonies; but the Government winked at irregularities, and overt disaffection might drive Elizabeth into the arms of Rome. Meanwhile, the mass of the nation was growing accustomed to the settlement and finding it tolerable. Controversy

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there was between the new bishops and the Catholic exiles; but, as compared with the preceding decade, the first few years of Elizabeth's reign were a time of religious peace.

In 1558 the danger of foreign aggression appeared as great as that of civil strife. England and France were at war, and with Mary Stuart married to the Dauphin, the hostility of France seemed inevitably to involve that of Scotland. In view of Mary's claim to the throne, the position looked perilous, and foreign statesmen thought that Elizabeth's only hope lay in humble continuance of the Spanish alliance. But Elizabeth was determined that England should depend on itself alone. Even before the conclusion of the general peace of 1559, she braved Spanish wrath by refusing an offer of marriage from Philip, and by adopting a Protestant solution of the religious question. Internal harmony, she saw, was worth even more than the friendship of Spain; besides, Philip's jealousy of France would keep him from any action likely to improve the prospects of Mary Stuart. Nevertheless the situation demanded careful walking, and Elizabeth's difficulties might have beaten her but for the appearance of an unexpected ally.

For some years Protestantism had been making great headway in Scotland. In 1557 some of the nobility formed a league which they called the "Congregation of Jesus Christ," and signed a covenant pledging themselves to the thorough reform of the Scottish Church. Closely linked with the zeal for reform was alarm at the growing influence of France. Not only was the young queen betrothed to a French prince, but Scotland was governed by her mother, Mary of Guise, a Frenchwoman and a strong Catholic. Thus Protestantism and patriotism mutually strengthened each other.

In 1559 Mary of Guise made an attempt to put down heresy and disaffection. The Lords of the Congregation took up arms and gathered round them a large force. Mary's summons of aid from France was countered by an appeal for support to Elizabeth.

After careful deliberation Elizabeth despatched a

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naval and military expedition to help the Scottish rebels. Mary of Guise died while besieged in Leith, and her followers speedily came to terms. The French troops were withdrawn, and the government was put into the hands of Scotsmen. Immediately afterwards the Scottish Parliament repudiated papal authority, suppressed the monasteries, abolished the mass, and adopted a confession of faith drawn up by John Knox. That fiery Calvinist at once set about the re-organisation of the Church on Presbyterian lines.

The value to Elizabeth of this revolution can scarcely be over-estimated. Just when Mary Stuart's claim seemed about to give additional sting to the traditional hostility of Scotland towards England, that hostility was transformed into friendship. To Knox and the Lords of the Congregation Elizabeth was an ally against their own queen, and it was impossible for Mary to use Scotland as a base of operations against her rival. Moreover, the bond established in 1560 was never completely broken. Mutual jealousy there might be, even actual conflict, but the days were over when perpetual enmity between Scotland and England was considered part of the natural order of the universe.

Elizabeth had shown herself capable of daring and decisive action both at home and abroad. But for some years after 1560 her aim in general was to do as little as possible. Her success had been great, but she knew that troubles were in store, and that the longer they were deferred the more able would the nation be to meet them. Nothing must therefore be done to imperil the maintenance of peace.

Elizabeth soon grasped that the real enemy of English development would be Spain rather than France, and from 1564 friendship with the latter state was being cautiously cultivated. At the same time she completely mystified both Spain and the papacy as to her ultimate intentions regarding both politics and religion. Both hesitated to strike for fear of hurting one who was at heart a friend.

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At home if the Romanists kept quiet they were left in peace, though everyone knew that mass was said in many a manor-house. On the other hand, the irregularities of the Puritans, as extreme Protestants began to be called, drove Parker, the Archbishop of Canterbury, to enforce a minimum of uniformity. But even this left the Puritans much latitude.

Meanwhile the nation was rapidly growing in strength and confidence. Sound finance had restored English credit; and these years were conspicuous for commercial enterprise in Eastern Europe, while English traders began to poach on the Portuguese preserves in West Africa and on the jealously-guarded colonies of Spain in the New World. The expansion of foreign trade produced a marked effect at home. Manufacturing industry developed; the towns grew; the increased demand for bread again made it profitable to grow corn. The distress of the previous reigns was much diminished. It is due to Elizabeth's counsellors to record that they strove to accelerate the improvement by legislation, though it cannot be proved that their efforts did much good.

The new vigour of the nation was put to a severe test by the difficulties which in 1568 began to crowd in on Elizabeth. For some years Mary Stuart, now a widow, had been back in Scotland. Her address and charm had soon mollified the hostility with which she was at first regarded; and though John Knox was proof against feminine wiles, her success in forming a party of devoted adherents gave serious concern to Elizabeth. But Mary, lacking Elizabeth's power of controlling passion in the interests of policy, had married Lord Darnley, whose folly and arrogance speedily disgusted the Scottish nation. An attempt to destroy the power of the Lords of the Congregation further weakened her influence. Next she quarrelled with her husband, connived at his murder by her lover the Earl of Bothwell, and married that ruffian immediately afterwards. The disgusted Scots rose in arms.

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Mary was defeated, imprisoned, deposed, and a regent was appointed for her infant son James VI. Next year Mary escaped, but, being again defeated, fled to England and appealed to Elizabeth for help.

What claim Mary had on Elizabeth's support it is difficult to see. Her appearance in England certainly put the queen into grave perplexity. Every possible course was open to serious objections. Eventually Elizabeth decided that wisdom and humanity might best be served by keeping Mary under honourable restraint.

Elizabeth's resolve meant that she would allow her chief rival to remain in her territories and become the focus of Romanist disaffection. To make matters worse, Philip and the pope had just become convinced that Elizabeth was really an enemy. A critical time followed. The Spanish ambassador wove a far-reaching plot. But the design was scented out by the queen's spies, and with great skill the conspirators were forced to strike before their plans were complete. The Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland indeed threatened great things at the head of the famous "Rising of the North"; but despite the high-souled devotion of many of the rebels, the revolt was broken and punished with little trouble.

Then came the turn of the pope. In 1570 Pius V issued a bull excommunicating Elizabeth and absolving her subjects from their allegiance. Before the Rising the bull might have done the queen much harm; but, coming too late, it fell flat. Strictly interpreted it meant that no devoted Romanist could be a loyal subject of Elizabeth; but its usual effect on Englishmen was to increase their hatred of Rome and their devotion to the queen.

For the next eighteen years Elizabeth was at grips with the foes that had been threatening her peace from the first; and her final victory was due largely to her skill in postponing the struggle till the nation was strong enough to survive it. There were four principal

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sources of danger—Mary Stuart, the King of Spain, the pope, and the English Romanists. Two weapons were at their disposal—armed invasion and conspiracy.

The first was the more formidable, but it was easier to provide against it. Elizabeth dexterously kept on good terms with France. The more dangerous Spaniards had their hands sufficiently full with the revolt of the Netherlands, in which many Englishmen took part, at first privately, but afterwards with the open countenance of the Government. For a long while, therefore, a Spanish invasion of England was out of the question, and the formal relations of the two states remained friendly.

It must not be supposed that English policy seemed to contemporaries as simple and decisive as it appears when thus crudely summarised. In the annals of diplomacy there can be few parallels to the tortuous intrigues of Elizabeth during these years. Chicanery and double-dealing were to be expected; daring and insincere offers of her hand were more startling and shameless. Least discreditable perhaps, and certainly of most permanent influence, was Elizabeth's use of the growing spirit of maritime enterprise, now turning more and more towards the Spanish possessions in America.

Like all states then and long afterwards, Spain regarded her colonies merely as sources of gain to the mother country. None but Spaniards might trade with them. When John Hawkins kidnapped wretched negroes in Africa and sold them as slaves on the Spanish Main, he might be welcomed by the colonists, but in the eyes of the authorities he was a common smuggler. In 1568 he paid the penalty; he was surprised in a Mexican harbour and, after a desperate fight, lost four ships. The circumstances of the attack, however, certainly laid the Spaniards open to the charge of treachery; and Hawkins and his fellow-captain Drake considered that they had legitimate grounds for taking vengeance. Henceforward English enterprise in the New World was

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led by Drake, and the pretext of trade was seldom used. The motives of the most conspicuous captains were as various as their characters. Sheer love of adventure appears in all. Zeal for exploration and genuine religious fervour can be traced in Drake and the best of his associates. Revenge for alleged Spanish atrocities was another common object ; and more influential still was lust for Spanish gold. But whatever their motives, these raiders were marvellously successful.

Formally, it must be remembered, England and Spain were at peace till 1587. The Spanish Government accordingly denounced the English raiders as pirates. And pirates they were if judged by the standard of modern international law. But if any international law existed in the sixteenth century, "no peace in the tropics" was one of its best-known maxims. Philip, moreover, was in no position to throw stones. While the English seamen were plundering his colonies, he was encouraging rebellion in England and Ireland, and supporting plots to murder the queen. The truth is that England and Spain were all the time at war, and both knew it, though it suited neither to say so.

The exploits of the Elizabethan seamen pointed the way to subsequent colonisers, and herein lies their chief importance. But they were not without an immediate influence on the political situation. They revealed to Philip Elizabeth's power to harm him, shook the military and financial confidence of the Spaniards, and stimulated English enthusiasm. Though it was not till 1585 that any captain sailed against Spain under the queen's commission, she of course knew of all the principal expeditions before then. Where a modern statesman would build two or three extra Dreadnoughts, Elizabeth allowed Drake to sail to America ; and the full significance of his great voyages can only be understood if the European situation at the time be kept in view.

Elizabeth might defer open attack, but she could not

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prevent the formation of numerous plots. One of the most pretentious was the Ridolfi Plot of 1571. The pope, Mary Stuart, the English Catholics, were all involved: Elizabeth was to be murdered, Mary made queen, and Catholicism restored. In 1574 there appeared Romanist missionaries from the Continent—clergy educated at the college for English Catholics established first at Douay, then at Rheims. These “seminary priests” seem as a rule to have avoided direct interference in politics; but a new phase opened when in 1580 Pope Gregory XIII despatched two Jesuit missionaries to England. One of them, the sincere and devoted Edmund Campion, who cared about nothing but religion, was soon caught and executed; but his more dangerous colleague Parsons escaped to become the principal agent in the series of conspiracies which immediately followed. Some of these aimed at the assassination of Elizabeth, some at the organisation of a Catholic rising. The Spanish ambassador was privy to them all, Mary Stuart to several. But every plot failed. Elizabeth had the mass of the nation behind her. In 1585 thousands of Englishmen signed the so-called Bond of Association, pledging themselves to defend the queen and, in the event of her murder, to put to death any who might benefit by the crime. The zeal of Parliament for her protection had sometimes to be restrained by Elizabeth herself. A series of penal laws was directed against the Romanists. To engage in missionary activity was made treason; the penalties for offences against the Act of Uniformity were enormously increased; and in 1585 all Jesuits and seminary priests were ordered to leave the realm. Though the Government exercised a wise discretion in the enforcement of these Acts, nearly two hundred Catholics suffered death before the end of the reign. Their devotion and courage, however, failed to excite the sympathy felt for the Protestants under Mary. Most of Elizabeth’s victims had been actively engaged in Romanist propaganda, and the charge against them

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was always one of treason, not of heresy. In point of fact many were real martyrs to their faith; but the pope's bull had made every Romanist a presumptive traitor, and few Englishmen had any compassion for such.

Though penal laws were useful checks on Romanist activity, the conspiracies would never have been so completely baffled without the marvellous secret service organised by Elizabeth's great statesmen, Lord Burghley and Sir Francis Walsingham. There were *agents-provocateurs*, professional cypher-readers, professional tamperers with seals, professional converts to Catholicism, as well as commonplacé instruments like faithful valets and maid-servants. Every plan of Elizabeth's enemies became known to the Government long before the time fixed for its execution. Finally, in the discovery of what is known as Babington's Plot, Mary of Scotland was clearly brought within the meaning of a recent Act against those compassing the death of the queen.

It had long been widely recognised that, with Mary out of the way, Elizabeth's position would become immeasurably easier; and but for the English queen the prisoner would have been put to death years before. Elizabeth's most trusted counsellors were now strongly in favour of Mary's execution, and the Babington Plot broke down the queen's resistance to their arguments. Mary was brought to trial, and after painful hesitation Elizabeth consented to the execution of the death sentence.

As to the justice of the deed historians and romancers will wrangle for ever. But it was highly effectual. It took away all purpose from plots against the queen. Better Elizabeth than Mary's son James with his Presbyterian education. It is true that Mary's death, added to English transgressions in America and the Netherlands, enraged Philip into open war. He furnished up a far-fetched claim to the English throne and made ready the Armada. But, like the Bull of 1570, Philip's

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expedition came just too late. Many English Catholics would have helped the Spaniards to put Mary on the throne; very few were prepared to rise for Philip himself. It is possible that if a blow could have been struck when Catholic indignation at Mary's fate was in its first flush, English resistance might have been crippled by civil discord. But in 1587 Drake raided Cadiz harbour, and played such havoc with the shipping that the expedition had to be put off for a year.

Drake's exploit was of twofold value to England. For the Government was far from ready for naval war on a large scale. The voyages to America were private enterprises, and the royal navy was small and neglected. The hope of the nation rested on the privateers, and it took time to collect these and form a concerted plan of action. At this supreme crisis, indeed, the queen played a sorry part. Her innate parsimony obscured her foresight, and even after the respite won by Drake, the English fleet went into action short of food and powder.

Even thus handicapped, the English sailors were more than a match for their opponents. *Caeteris paribus* their seamanship would probably have brought them victory, and superiority of skill was emphasised by superiority in ships, guns, and strategy. The aim of the Armada was to transport Spanish troops to the Straits of Dover, convoy another army across from the Netherlands, and disembark both forces in Kent. The English harried them up the Channel, trying to bring on a general engagement under favourable conditions. Nevertheless Spanish discipline and perverse winds foiled the efforts of the English captains, and the Armada, though damaged and somewhat disheartened, succeeded in reaching Calais. But next night Drake sent fire-ships into the harbour. The Spaniards hurried out in a panic; the English fleet seized its chance; and a desperate struggle off Gravelines ended in the flight northwards of the Spanish ships that survived.

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In numbers the Armada was still formidable. But the Spaniards dared not turn southward till they had rounded Cape Wrath, and a succession of gales and the rocks of Scotland and Ireland completed the work of the English gunners.

CHAPTER V

CROWN VERSUS PARLIAMENT

THE defeat of the Armada might be ascribed by Elizabeth to providential weather, and by courtiers to the wisdom and virtue of the queen; but in reality the praise was due to the nation. And this was of the utmost significance. It meant that the Tudors had done their work. They had made the nation strong enough to do without them.

During the rest of Elizabeth's reign the vigour of English nationality was illustrated on every side. Though state control of the struggle with Spain rather hampered the English captains, the war was waged with general success. Commerce continued to flourish, and in 1600 the formation of the East India Company marked the beginning of a momentous phase of English expansion. But the most notable feature of these years was the literature they produced. Spenser had reached the zenith of his powers. Marlowe's best work dates from the years immediately following the defeat of the Armada. In 1590 Shakespeare wrote *Love's Labour's Lost*, and by 1603 the world was richer by nearly all his comedies and histories, and by the tragedies of *Julius Cæsar* and *Hamlet*. Ben Jonson, too, was rising to fame; while from a host of luminaries of the second magnitude came pamphlets, lyrics, and plays without end. And if prose lagged somewhat behind, verse, Hooker and Bacon remind us that the cause was the super-excellence of the poets.

A people which can produce such fruits stands in no need of a benevolent monarch. It is true that Eliza-

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beth never seemed stronger than in her last years. Her early difficulties were overcome. Spain was kept on the defensive; the Catholics were disheartened and divided among themselves, and their plots lacked strength and purpose. It is true also that the men of letters were concerned with the individual rather than the state, and that, while they sang the praises of freedom from the rule of passion or circumstance, they showed no interest in freedom of Government. But there were more ideas afoot than were contained in even Shakespeare's philosophy, and there was a widespread and growing spirit of antagonism to the existing constitution in both Church and State.

To many Protestants, as we have seen, the Church as set up in 1559 was a very imperfect institution. Between the lines of the Prayer-book there lurked much idolatry and superstition. The first Puritans, however, did not deny the right of the State to establish a form of religion and enforce a general observance of it. Many of them consequently accepted benefices and even high preferment. After all, though the Church had the tail of the dragon of Rome, the light of the gospel beamed from its eyes, and evangelical truth flowed eloquently from its lips. And it was hoped that the queen would soon allow the tail to be cut off.

It has been mentioned that for some time Puritan irregularities were allowed to pass unchecked. But the increase in the numbers, influence, and optimism of the Puritans alarmed Elizabeth, who was resolved to uphold the settlement of 1559 as the best means of securing a maximum of harmony. The consequent attempt by Parker to enforce uniformity introduces a new phase of the Puritan movement.

From questions of ritual the controversy now shifts to questions of organisation. Calvinists in theology, the Puritans were naturally disposed to favour their master's system of Church government. The hostility shown them by the bishops added a practical grievance to a theoretical preference, and we soon hear of attacks

on the whole constitution of the English Church. Some of the malcontents were content with demanding a limitation of episcopal power; others, however, regarded bishops as limbs of Antichrist, and clamoured for the complete introduction of a Presbyterian system.

Extreme opinions made rapid progress. Though in 1571 Parliament did Puritanism a bad turn by recognising the Thirty-nine Articles of religion, it was as a rule aggressively in favour of drastic changes. Parker's successor, Edmund Grindal, sympathised with the Puritans, and drew down Elizabeth's wrath for his leniency towards them. But as the queen still set her face against the smallest concession, the Elizabethan settlement remained unmoved.

The attitude of the queen eventually produced its natural effect. The Presbyterians were not dissenters in the modern sense; they accepted the principle of national uniformity in religion, and most of them thought it wrong to secede from the Established Church. But about 1583 the Brownists, afterwards known as the Independents, make their appearance. Their leader, Robert Brown, denied the right of the civil power to interfere with religion. Each Christian congregation should be independent and self-sufficing, with freedom to choose its minister and decide the manner of its worship. Brown, in fact, had reached the principle of religious toleration.

The revolt of the Brownists began almost at the same time as the accession to the primacy of John Whitgift. Though himself a Calvinist in theology, the new archbishop was determined to stamp out Puritanism. His weapon was the Court of High Commission, established under the Act of Uniformity to deal with religious offences. He demanded of all beneficed clergy a recognition of the royal supremacy and a declaration of agreement with the Thirty-nine Articles and the Prayer-book. Those who failed to comply were deprived, fined, or imprisoned. But though the Puritans became quieter towards the end of the reign,

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it is improbable that Whitgift's energy had much to do with the change. The fact was that the violence of certain fanatical controversialists and the rise of the Brownists had somewhat alarmed men of moderate views. Few protests were raised when two or three Brownists were hanged for denying the royal supremacy, and in 1593 Parliament even passed a law sentencing to banishment Protestants who frequented unlawful meetings and refused to go to church. The Puritans, moreover, had a high regard for the queen, despite her resistance to their views, and were loth to disturb her old age. Their influence, though less patent, was still increasing, and they could afford to wait for her successor.

It must be remembered that the Puritans were not a religious sect. Puritanism as such had no creed, no code of morals, no organisation. It was nothing more tangible than a habit of mind. The Puritans were alike in their dread of the superstition of the Middle Ages and the worldliness of the Renaissance, in their appeal on all things to Scripture and their conception of morality as obedience to rigid laws. But their principles were compatible with great variety of practice. Mention has been made of their disagreement on Church government, and still wider differences are to be traced in their views on conduct. It follows that the term Puritan was very loosely used; in fact, any man of a serious turn was liable to have it attached to him. But to politicians a Puritan was one who supported further reform of the Church.

Puritanism was one of the forces destined to overthrow the Tudor system of government. The other was the desire for constitutional liberty, expressed through Parliament.

In the sixteenth century the driving force of the State was the Crown. But there could be no greater mistake than to suppose that Parliament was in abeyance. The Houses met frequently, if not as often as in the later Middle Ages, and it is noteworthy that sessions were specially numerous in the critical period

between 1530 and 1560. The breach with the papacy, the suppression of the monasteries, the introduction of the Prayer-book, the re-union with Rome, the Elizabethan settlement, were all effected by Act of Parliament. Tudor monarchs and statesmen were not given to theorising about the constitution. But when they did so, their references to Parliament would have satisfied a modern radical.

No attempt, then, was made to introduce a new constitutional theory. It is true that up to the death of Henry VIII Parliament seldom shows an independent spirit. Important measures are invariably initiated by the Crown and almost always accepted by the Houses. They gave legal sanction to some of Henry VIII's most tyrannical actions, allowed financial irregularities to pass without protest, and even conferred on him a certain power of arbitrary legislation. But it will not do to judge them too harshly. Sometimes they acted through terror of the king; but generally, it seems, they cast their votes sincerely, either approving of his proposals or honestly trusting that he knew best. And, paradoxical though it sounds, their subservience was to the advantage of English liberty. In the early days of Tudor rule Parliament was unpopular. Had it proved obstinate, the Crown was strong enough to abolish it. As things were, Henry found it useful for impressing foreigners and confounding critical Englishmen, and thus it was saved for better days.

After Henry's death a change becomes evident. Under Edward and Mary the Commons are very critical of Government proposals; under Elizabeth they begin to introduce important bills and to offer advice on any subject of public interest. In vain did the queen tell them that their business was to say "aye" or "no" to questions propounded by the Government; in vain did she send to the Tower members who raised forbidden topics; in vain did she create new boroughs in districts where royal influence was strong. The House always returned to the charge. In the last

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session of the reign it severely criticised the grant of monopolies for the sale of the necessaries of life, and the queen was driven to revoke the offensive privileges.

At the end of the century and for the next forty years the Commons were firmly united in a determination to enforce their rights as against the Crown. The House, moreover, always contained an overwhelming majority of Puritans, who were never weary of urging the reform of the Church. The leaders and spokesmen of the House were sometimes lawyers, but generally country gentlemen; and it had behind it the support of the middle-classes, which, under the Tudors, had risen to great social and political importance.

The reason for this widespread and rapid growth of interest in politics has been variously stated. The spread of learning no doubt had something to do with it. It is also true that the increasing influence of Calvinism favoured the growth of democratic opinions. But though there was an undoubted connection between the Puritanism and the politics of the House of Commons, its origin was probably accidental rather than logical. The Puritans wanted the reform of the Church, and naturally expressed their views in Parliament. They were then told that Parliament had no right to concern itself with such matters. Doubting the validity of this plea, they were led to examine the precedents of the Middle Ages, and they soon found that in the Lancastrian period it was Parliament rather than the Crown that guided the State. None of the powers then exercised had been formally abrogated. Why should they not be revived? Only by that means could the purification of the Church be accomplished. Hence in the minds of a great body of Englishmen religious reform and parliamentary government were inextricably knitted together.

In 1603 the House of Commons was a formidable enemy to face. The Puritans were the moral aristocracy of the country. They had with them lawyers to cite custom and precedent. The country squires in the

House were often men with a university education, and, as Justices of the Peace, many of them had experience in the conduct of public business. Thoroughly in touch with public opinion, they possessed the confidence not merely of the middle-class electors, but also of the unenfranchised masses, who knew and trusted their character and ability.

Up to the accession of James I Elizabeth's tact and popularity averted a serious quarrel between Parliament and the Crown. But grave troubles were brewing; and to make matters worse for the new king, everyone with a grievance had high hopes of his favour. The Puritans looked for much from the king of Presbyterian Scotland; and the Romanists calculated on the sympathy of the son of the martyred Mary Stuart.

All these hopes were soon dashed. The penal laws were not repealed, and when Romanist disappointment formed the unsuccessful Gunpowder Plot, they were made more stringent than before. The Puritans met with similar surprises. James's authority in Scotland had been ignored and insulted by the Presbyterian ministers; in his heart he hated them and their Kirk; while the deference shown him by the English bishops rejoiced his soul. A thousand Puritan clergymen had presented him with a petition asking for a few moderate changes in worship and organisation. But when a conference met at Hampton Court to discuss the points raised, James, scenting Presbyterianism in the arguments of the Puritan spokesmen, refused all concessions. "Presbytery and monarchy," he said, "agree as well as God and the devil." "No bishop, no king" was henceforth the motto of his religious policy. In a few months two hundred clergymen lost their livings for refusing conformity to the Prayer-book.

In addition to his hatred of Puritanism, there were many causes for the strained relations which soon became chronic between king and Parliament. Though kind-hearted, broad-minded, and by nature of shrewd judgment, James had defects which far outweighed his

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virtues. His undignified appearance told against him. He was tactless and obstinate. Worst of all perhaps, he was hopelessly pedantic, with all a pedant's infatuation for his theories. And of these the dearest to his heart was the doctrine of the divine hereditary right of kings. Much had been heard about Divine Right in Tudor-times. But the Tudor theory simply demanded obedience to the powers that be. How the powers came to be was not in question. James, however, regarded himself as king, not because the nation was willing to accept him or because Elizabeth had recognised him as her successor, but because by the divinely-ordained rule of succession by primogeniture, he and no other was lawfully entitled to the English throne. And, as the Lord's Anointed, he was responsible to God alone. If he ruled tyrannically, God would punish him in the next world, but it was wicked for his subjects to disobey him in this. The utmost they might do was to beseech God to convert or remove their oppressor. Despotism tempered by prayer, in short, was the only rightful government.

It is no wonder that James and his Parliaments were almost always at loggerheads. The king's character and manners, as well as his views, were highly provocative. But on particular issues it is often impossible not to feel sorry for him. He tried to do as the Tudors had done, and was told that his actions were illegal. When he appealed to recent practice, he was assailed with statutes and precedents from the Middle Ages. James never understood that the despotism of the Tudors had been based largely on popular consent, and that the people were no longer willing to place themselves at the mercy of the Crown. But he can hardly be blamed for his failure to grasp the essential difference between his position and that of his predecessors.

He can, however, be blamed for unseasonable assertions of high-flown theories of monarchy; for an obstinate adherence, in the teeth of public opinion, to a disastrous policy of alliance with Spain; for attempts

to bully judges and lawyers of independent views ; and for the affection and confidence bestowed on worthless favourites like Robert Carr and George Villiers. It is such manifestations of folly that enlist one's sympathies on the side of the Commons in most of their differences with James. On the main current of national history the details of these controversies exert little influence. James held his own in regard to religious reform, and a drawn battle was fought on the right of the Crown to levy customs without consent of Parliament. Yet by the end of the reign the Commons had achieved some notable triumphs. They had successfully asserted their right to discuss all questions of State. They had fought and won a second battle over monopolies. In 1621 they had driven from office the Lord Chancellor, the great Francis Bacon, on a charge of judicial corruption ; and three years later the Lord Treasurer, the Earl of Middlesex, had met with a similar fate. Such victories made them more enthusiastic and confident than ever.

When, in 1625, James died he was succeeded by a man even less fitted to face the impending crisis. Physically, Charles possessed in ample measure the dignity and grace that his father so conspicuously lacked. In private morality he was temperate, chaste, and brave. But in public dealings his good qualities were more than neutralised by his love of crooked intrigue and contempt for promises. And, with James's disastrous opinions, he added to them a stupidity which rendered him incapable of grasping the essential factors of a situation. This last weakness was the main cause of his ruin.

Though at first Charles was popular, his favour with the nation soon disappeared. He married Henrietta Maria, a French princess, who was of course a Roman Catholic. His confidence in Villiers, now Duke of Buckingham, exceeded even his father's. More distrust still was aroused by his support of a party which was making great headway in the Church of England. Its re-

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presentatives, called by modern writers Anglo-Catholics, were by the Puritans commonly styled Arminians, because on some points they shared the views of Arminius, a Dutch critic of Calvinism. They had much in common with the High Churchmen of to-day. They upheld the divine origin of episcopacy, attached great importance to the sacraments, and favoured an elaborate ritual. The Puritans naturally, but unjustly, accused them of wishing to lead the English Church back to Rome. They had better grounds when they attacked the political views of the new party, for, recognising their dependence on the Crown, the Arminian leaders endorsed all Charles's theories of his authority.

There was thus plenty of fuel for controversy between Charles and his subjects. His first Parliament attacked the Arminians, criticised his foreign policy, and gave bitter and not unreasonable offence by granting for one year only the customs duties called tunnage and poundage, which for two centuries had always been conferred on a new king for life. In the following year Parliament drew up a formidable list of charges against Buckingham, and a dissolution seemed to Charles the only means of saving him. Already at war with Spain, Charles and his favourite next involved themselves in a foolish and disastrous conflict with France. To raise funds recourse was had to a forced loan, and some of those who refused to pay were imprisoned without trial. In 1628, however, the king's necessities drove him to meet his third Parliament, and the redress of grievances was vigorously taken in hand by the Commons under the experienced leadership of Sir John Eliot, Sir Edward Coke, and John Pym. Eventually they presented to the king the famous Petition of Right. After some characteristic attempts at evasion Charles agreed to its contents. He thereby acknowledged that he had no right to exact any "gift, loan, benevolence, tax, or such like charge without common consent by Act of Parliament." He recognised the illegality of arbitrary imprisonment. He promised to abandon the device of

billeting soldiers on obnoxious subjects and the dangerous practice of setting up courts of martial law in times of internal peace. It was a great victory for the cause of constitutional liberty.

Nevertheless the Petition failed to restore harmony between Parliament and the Crown. A quarrel broke out as to whether customs duties came under the clause dealing with taxation. Parliament was prorogued, and shortly afterwards Buckingham was murdered by a fanatical soldier. But his place was more than filled by Sir Thomas Wentworth, one of the most conspicuous Parliamentary leaders, who had just gone over to the side of the king. Stung by the loss of his friend, and probably incited by Wentworth, Charles took up a high line when the Houses re-assembled. They were soon dissolved, though not before the Commons had passed resolutions denouncing as enemies of the kingdom those who favoured Arminianism and those who levied or paid tunnage and poundage without consent of Parliament. Charles took his revenge by sending several prominent members to the Tower, where two years later Eliot died.

From 1629 to 1640 no Parliament was summoned. During this time the king's chief counsellors were Sir Thomas Wentworth and William Laud, the leader of the Anglo-Catholics. Of these the former was much the abler man. With his strong will, unfaltering courage, lack of scruple, and quickness of grasp, he was a most valuable instrument for effecting Charles's purpose of making himself absolute, though his tendency to unnecessary violence and undue contempt of his opponents was destined to involve both himself and his master in grievous trouble.

Laud was cast in a much smaller mould. He was unquestionably upright and sincere. But he was pedantic, fussy, lacking in a sense of proportion, and totally unable to gauge the effect of his actions on others. Still, his energy and enthusiasm made him a dangerous enemy.

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It was probably Wentworth who devised the policy of Charles during the thirties—a policy to which he gave the name of “Thorough.” There must be war to the knife between the king and the Parliamentary party. Since they would not work humbly with him, they must be trampled down. To this end a military force was necessary. In 1632, therefore, Wentworth was sent to govern Ireland, and by sheer force of character and lack of scruple, he bent the Irish Parliament to his will, cowed the country into peace and order, and began to build up the army which Charles would need for the achievement of his grand design.

In England, which as yet it was unsafe to bully, Charles tried to keep on the windy side of the law. The collection of customs duties was continued on the ground that the Petition of Right said nothing about them. Mediæval history was ransacked, and obsolete excuses for demanding money were dragged from obscurity. But the most notorious of the king's financial devices was that of Ship Money—a levy made ostensibly for the maintenance of the navy. As long as Charles limited his demands to counties on the coast, he was within legal limits; but when he extended the tax to inland counties he was met by strongly-grounded refusals to pay. But in the test case of John Hampden, a Buckinghamshire gentleman, a majority of the judges decided in favour of the Crown.

While not yielding enough to meet the expenses of Government, Charles's expedients gave rise to immense annoyance. And even greater indignation was excited by the doings of Laud.

After occupying several bishoprics, Laud became primate in 1633. His aim was to capture the Church of England for his own party, and he at once began an implacable war against every class of Puritans. He instigated the king to make demands on the clergy with which it was known the Puritan conscience could not comply. The smallest irregularity was made an excuse for depriving the offender of his living, and,

whenever possible, the vacancies were filled by Anglo-Catholics. In the most religious period of English history, when moreover everyone was forced by law to attend his parish church, it was inevitable that this policy should kindle intense anger. Though Laud, no doubt, did good in suppressing much scandalous disorder and irreverence, the fact remains that his general conduct was amazingly shortsighted.

Passion if anything stronger was aroused by the efforts of Charles and Laud to crush criticism and resistance. Their instruments were the Courts of Star Chamber and High Commission, neither of which was bound by the procedure of the courts of common law, with its guarantee of fair play for the prisoner. Most ferocious punishments were inflicted. For instance Prynne, a lawyer, and Burton, a physician, for writing against episcopacy, were fined £5000, and condemned to stand in the pillory, have their ears cut off, and suffer imprisonment for life. Indignation at such sentences was increased by the general belief that the two courts habitually went beyond the limits of their legal jurisdiction. Though the question is one of some intricacy, Charles's opponents were probably right.

Laud was too much of a fanatic, Charles too stupid, to grasp the real state of public opinion. Outwardly the country was tranquil. Englishmen had been schooled by the Tudors into a horror of rebellion. And after all Charles's tyranny made little difference to the routine of the average man. There was little social distress; the chief grievances were intellectual and spiritual. Moreover, in those days there were none of our modern devices for conducting a political agitation outside Parliament. Ignorant of their real strength, the opposition party needed the excitement of parliamentary debate to screw them to the sticking-point. In fact, if Charles could have avoided the summons of Parliament till Wentworth's army was ready, he might have triumphed. But his chances were wrecked by Laud.

Both James and Charles were anxious to assimilate

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the Church of Scotland to that of England. Both, however, recognised the advisability of proceeding with great caution. But in 1637 Laud prevailed upon Charles to order the use of a modified Book of Common Prayer in the Scottish Church. The book was contumeliously rejected, and almost the whole nation signed a covenant pledging themselves to defend Presbyterianism and resist all innovations. After abortive negotiations, Charles found himself at war with his northern kingdom. Short of funds and soldiers, he was soon driven to sign a provisional treaty, which, however, failed to lead to a permanent settlement. Wentworth was summoned from Ireland, and advised Charles to carry matters with a high hand. The war should be waged with vigour; money should be got from Parliament.

Early in 1640 there was once again a general election. But Wentworth soon found that an English House of Commons was very different from an Irish one. After a few days of wrangling, the disgusted Charles dissolved what has since been known as the Short Parliament.

For a month or two Charles tried to copy the Irish policy of Wentworth. Members of Parliament were imprisoned, and a loan demanded from London. But the Scots soon stopped Charles's game by crossing the border and occupying Northumberland and Durham. To check their advance, the king agreed to pay the wages of their troops until a final settlement should be arranged. With his pockets empty, Charles recognised that there was nothing for it but to face the Houses once more, and November 1640 saw the first meeting of the historic Long Parliament.

CHAPTER VI

THE PURITAN REVOLUTION

ONCE again Charles was faced by a compact body of five hundred opponents. They were mostly prosperous country gentlemen, many of ancient lineage, many with a university education. Lord Morley points out that of the famous men competent to sit only Milton and Hobbes were missing. Such an assembly had no temptation to rush into wanton revolution.

The Parliament was a strong force in a strong position. It could be neither dissolved nor coerced ; for without its aid Charles could not get rid of the Scots, and until the Scots retired the English army had to remain in the north. In John Pym, moreover, the Commons had a leader fitted to make the most of the opportunity. He was of great parliamentary experience. He possessed a remarkable insight into tangled situations, and great skill in adapting his measures to the occasion. His courage was high and his eloquence powerful. He was, it is true, somewhat deficient in moral scruple and apt to be led by his more violent followers. But he was the very man for a winning game.

Pym at once grasped that an indispensable preliminary of success was the destruction of Wentworth, now Earl of Strafford. Almost the first act of the Commons was to impeach him before the Lords on a charge of treason. Strafford's immediate imprisonment rendered him powerless to harm. But when the trial began the Commons failed to make good their case. It was possible to prove that Strafford had aimed at "introducing arbitrary and tyrannical government," and that by the use of naked force. But under no

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reasonable interpretation of the law could such an intention or the giving of advice in accordance with it be construed as treason. Ultimately the Commons, with a case weak in fact as well as law, resolved to get their way by bill of attainder. That is to say, they would pass a special Act for the Earl's execution. The infamous measure was carried by a large majority in the Lower House ; a strange conjunction of circumstances secured its unexpected acceptance by the Lords ; and after a few days of despicable wavering, Charles astounded the nation by consenting to the death of his faithful servant. Other supporters of Charles were made targets for the vengeance of Parliament. Some fled to the Continent ; others, among them Laud, were imprisoned pending a more complete investigation of their sins.

These victories encouraged the Commons in the work of destruction they had already begun. Acts were passed declaring illegal the levy without Parliamentary sanction of customs duties, ship money, and other exactions of Charles ; while the Courts of Star Chamber and High Commission were abolished. These measures, it is well to note, were not revolutionary. Their effect was to free the Constitution from the accretions that had clustered round it since the beginning of Tudor rule.

Such essentially conservative reforms were passed by overwhelming majorities. Lords and Commons alike wished to cut Charles's claws. But when religious problems had their turn, dissensions appeared immediately. The Commons were almost unanimous in dislike of Laud and in desire for some modification of the Elizabethan settlement. But while the Presbyterians and Independents demanded root-and-branch reform, there was a large body of opinion devoted to the Prayer-book and averse from the entire abolition of episcopacy. Men of these views, furthermore, generally held that enough check had been placed on the royal power. To demand more concessions from Charles would be both unnecessary and unreasonable.

When after a recess in the summer of 1641 the Long Parliament met for its second session, Charles had made peace with the Scots, and, with the Commons divided in opinion, the political future was uncertain. Then news came that the Irish Catholics, freed from the strong hand of Strafford, had risen in fury and were massacring the Protestant settlers. The radical party, believing that Charles had instigated the rebellion, were confirmed in their desire to curb his power still further. They drew up a "Grand Remonstrance," in which, after reviewing at great length the misdeeds of Charles since his accession, they asked him to assist them in the work of religious reform and to choose his ministers from men acceptable to Parliament. The debate on the Remonstrance crystallised the parties which had been forming. Aably led by Lord Falkland, a famous patron of art and letters, and by Edward Hyde, an eminent lawyer, the moderates opposed the adoption of the Remonstrance with all their might, and were defeated by only eleven votes. Henceforth they may be accounted supporters of the king.

Charles politely rejected the advice in the Remonstrance. His hopes had been raised by the attitude of Falkland's followers, and he resolved on a *coup d'état*. In January 1642 he accused Lord Mandeville and five members of the Lower House, including Pym, of having carried on treasonable communication with the Scots. The charge was well founded. But the king put himself in the wrong by an inadmissible legal procedure, and still more by invading the House of Commons with a band of swashbucklers to arrest the offending members. Warned of his intention, the five had sought refuge in the City, where the train-bands were called out to defend the liberties of Parliament. Charles judged it wise to withdraw from London, and soon afterwards he retired to the north.

Men began to see that the issue must be put to the sword. The members of the moderate party gradually left Westminster and joined the king. A few months

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were spent in idle negotiations ; and then, in August 1642, Charles raised the royal standard at Nottingham, and the great Civil War had formally begun.

Most of the nobility and gentry were for the king ; most of the middle-class against him ; while the lower orders fought according to the bias of the personal and local influences to which they were exposed. But there was plenty of blue blood in the armies of the Parliament, and numerous yeomen and burghers stood loyally by the king. The war was not a war of classes.

The king's cause was strong in the north and west, and his enemies predominated elsewhere. But each cause had its outposts in the enemy's country, and every shire contained numerous adherents of both parties. The absence of natural lines of cleavage between the two sides is no doubt responsible for the humanity with which on the whole the war was waged. There was no systematic ravaging, no slaughter of prisoners, and captured towns were seldom sacked. While there were, of course, many self-seekers in both parties, it would be difficult to find another civil war in which so many of the combatants were urged by disinterested devotion to lofty principles.

At the beginning of the struggle the Parliament had a large and well-appointed army, whereas the royal troops were inferior in numbers, badly equipped, and without discipline. But the king's nephew, Prince Rupert, soon converted a crowd of hard-riding gentlemen into a fine force of cavalry ; and for some time the Royalists, or Cavaliers as their enemies called them, had the better of the fighting. In the first campaign Charles was able to establish himself strongly at Oxford, which he made his headquarters for the rest of the war. In 1643 the tide flowed strongly against the Parliament. John Hampden, one of the best "Roundhead" leaders, was killed. A small force of Royalists advanced from Cornwall, conquered the whole of the south-west, and stormed Bristol. In the north the Parliament lost all Yorkshire save Hull. In their extremity the Round-

heads turned to Scotland. The Solemn League and Covenant was signed, the Scots undertaking to send an army into England, while the Parliament satisfied them of its readiness to adopt Presbyterianism as the established religion. The conclusion of this momentous treaty was the last achievement of Pym, who died before the next campaign.

In 1644 the Scots advanced into Yorkshire, where they were joined by the force raised for the Parliament in the eastern counties. What rendered this army peculiarly formidable was the regiment of horse commanded by Oliver Cromwell, a Huntingdonshire gentleman, who was member of Parliament for Cambridge. Cromwell had early realised the necessity of raising a force of cavalry capable of meeting Rupert's men on equal terms. To "gentlemen of honour" he resolved to oppose "men of religion." By 1644 he had under him eight hundred Puritan troopers, mostly well-to-do yeomen of high moral character and earnest religious conviction. The united Parliamentary forces laid siege to York. A brilliant march by Rupert to its relief led to an overwhelming victory for the Parliament at Marston Moor, the result being chiefly due to the marvellous exploits of Cromwell's cavalry.

Elsewhere, however, the fighting still went in favour of the king. The disappointment of the Roundheads led to the open expression of dissensions that had been growing in their ranks. Cromwell and his fellow-Independents accused the Earl of Essex and other Presbyterian generals of deliberate lukewarmness in the cause. Most of the Presbyterians, as Cromwell said, "did not want to beat the king too much." They had retained much respect for the kingly office, and thought that they might some day find in the Royalist party a useful ally against the Independents, of whom they were becoming rather afraid. But Cromwell and his supporters held that war was war, and that vigorous action was the nearest way to peace.

On this issue the Independents were able to carry

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Parliament with them. The army was re-organised, and placed under the immediate control of a commander-in-chief appointed by the Houses. At the same time there was passed the "Self-Denying Ordinance," which enacted that all members of Parliament should resign whatever appointments they held in the public services. By this means Essex and other unenterprising generals were put on one side. The "New Model" army was given the energetic Sir Thomas Fairfax as lord-general, and after resigning his previous commission, Cromwell was appointed commander of the horse.

The effect of the changes was immediate. A crushing defeat at Naseby broke the back of Royalist resistance. The systematic reduction of the west was carried out during the rest of 1645, and in the spring of the following year Charles in despair surrendered to the Scottish army, which since Marston Moor had remained in the north of England.

Then began weary negotiations for a settlement between Charles and the Parliament. Charles had played a creditable part in the war, but as soon as the fighting was over his innate insincerity began again to lead him astray. Aware of the division among his opponents, he hoped to regain by craft what he had lost in battle. It was a hopeless game, but events that soon occurred partly excuse him for trying it.

Since 1643 an assembly of Puritan divines had been sitting at Westminster in long-winded debate on Church reform. A strong majority recommended the establishment of Presbyterianism, and in 1646 a series of Parliamentary ordinances gave legal effect to their advice. There was no hint of toleration for those who disliked this solution. The Presbyterians, in fact, strongly upheld the principle of religious uniformity, and were as bitter against the Independents as they had been against Laud. Now the main object of the army, predominantly Independent in feeling, had been to secure that liberty of conscience which was now to be denied them. And as if it were not enough to cheat

the soldiers of their spiritual rewards, the Parliament proposed to disband a large part of the force without paying arrears of wages. Cromwell and other responsible officers in vain tried to avert an open quarrel. The king, whom the Scots had lately handed over to the Parliament, was seized by the army, which then occupied London and forced eleven conspicuous Presbyterians to withdraw from the House of Commons.

The army officers now offered to Charles and his followers terms more lenient than those demanded by the Parliament. But not only were Parliament and army at loggerheads, but Fairfax and Cromwell were severely criticised for their moderation by a section of the soldiers who held republican views. Thinking to make confusion worse confounded, Charles fled from Hampton Court, where he had been kept in honourable custody. Whatever his first intentions may have been, he eventually made his way to Carisbrooke, only to find himself held a virtual prisoner by the governor of the castle.

Indignation at Charles's flight temporarily cooled the dissensions that he had tried to inflame. But his hopes were soon revived by the Scots. Though they had fought as allies of the Parliament, they were indignant at the treatment to which a Stuart king was being subjected by the English. They were annoyed at the delay in establishing Presbyterianism on a firm footing, and at the influence of the Independents. Scottish commissioners held interviews with Charles at Carisbrooke, and it soon became known that a Scottish army was about to invade England in behalf of the king. Simultaneously Royalist risings broke out in several districts.

This turn of events convinced the army that Charles was incorrigible; and before the campaign the officers pledged themselves to bring "that man of blood to an account for the blood he hath shed." The so-called Second Civil War was all over in a few weeks of the summer of 1648. The English Royalists were soon

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crushed. Cromwell marched north, split the Scottish force in two near Preston, and hunted the larger half through Lancashire till scarce a man escaped death or capture.

Finding that the Presbyterians had been negotiating with Charles behind the army's back, the indignant soldiers now throw off all restraint. In December 1648 a hundred and forty Presbyterians were excluded from the House by a body of musketeers under Colonel Pride. The fifty or sixty members spared by "Pride's Purge" appointed a commission to try the king for treason to the nation. The resistance of the House of Lords was ignored, and Charles was brought up to London to be condemned. His dignified plea that no court was competent to try the king availed him nothing. Though half the commissioners, including Fairfax, refused to sit, sentence of death was passed after a few days. On January 30, 1649, Charles met his end at Whitehall with unswerving courage. "Nothing in his life became him like the leaving of it."

As to the morality of Charles's execution opinions differ now as much as they did at the time. More important to the historian are its political results. In spite of Carlyle's enthusiastic rhetoric, it is clear that Charles's death relieved the Independent leaders of none of their difficulties. On the contrary, it arrayed against them hosts of Charles's former enemies who were swayed by sentiment rather than by principle.

It has been shown how, in 1641, the Long Parliament split into two sections, and how a similar fate overtook the Parliamentarians at the end of the first Civil War. As a result, political supremacy now belonged to the Independents. They formed a minority of the nation; but they held the sword, and their enemies were as yet disunited. As soon, however, as the Independents attempted constructive work, they too began to undergo a process of disintegration. The truth was that they were no more homogeneous than the larger parties to which they had once belonged. "Liberty of con-

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science" made a good battle-cry, but it afforded a fragile basis for political reconstruction.

After Charles's death the monarchy and the House of Lords were formally abolished, and the Government of England was declared to be vested in the representatives of the people in the House of Commons. Unfortunately the existing House of Commons certainly did not represent the people. The Rump, as its enemies styled the fragment of the House that survived Pride's Purge, contained at most a hundred members of Independent views. But the infant republic was threatened by dangers on every side, and the army saw that until the future was more assured, the Rump must keep the machinery of government going. Till 1653 the democratic commonwealth was ruled by a most unrepresentative oligarchy.

It must be confessed, however, that the Commonwealth statesmen acquitted themselves with much credit. In 1649 Ireland, which maintained the royal cause, was rendered harmless by a ruthless campaign of Cromwell's. Scotland, too, had acknowledged the Prince of Wales as Charles II, and called on England to receive him; but in 1650 Cromwell was sent to the north, and before the end of the next year he had broken Scottish hostility by his victories at Dunbar and Worcester. Meanwhile the navy had been marvellously strengthened, and the seas cleared of Royalist privateers. Foreign states one by one recognised the new republic. The Rump even dared to adopt an aggressive commercial policy, which in 1652 involved the country in war with the Dutch.

When the chief perils had been averted, Cromwell and his soldiers looked to Parliament to establish representative government, redress social grievances, and settle the problem of religion. But the Rump showed little zeal in the work of reform and was in no hurry to terminate its own existence. After some time, however, the impatience of the troops alarmed the members, and negotiations regarding a dissolution were opened

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between Parliament and the officers. But some of the members were found to be playing the army false, and in April 1653 Cromwell took a company of musketeers to Westminster and drove out the poor remnant of the splendid assembly that had first met over twelve years before.

The ejection of the Rump left Cromwell, as commander-in-chief, the highest duly constituted authority in the State. To understand what followed the mental outlook of the man must be borne in mind. Cromwell was pre-eminently a man of action. For political theories he cared nothing. Numerous reforms were needed, and any government—democracy, monarchy, military despotism—which showed will and capacity to accomplish them, would be acceptable to Cromwell.

Cromwell's Calvinism led him to believe that at any juncture the course of action approved by God might be ascertained from the previous march of events. The revelation was always there, though it was not always easy to read it aright. Cromwell was therefore slow in deliberation and vigorous in action; but deeply conscious of his liability to error, he was ready, if things took an unexpected turn, to admit that he had been mistaken. This contempt of political theory and distrust of his own insight involved him in startling inconsistencies which critics then and since have held to be proofs of insincerity and self-seeking. But, without going into details, it may be taken as established that the long-prevalent view of Cromwell as a hypocrite, "a brave bad man," is exploded. His actions can all be explained without sacrificing his sincerity, though not perhaps without sacrificing some of his wisdom.

The years following the expulsion of the Rump were marked by a series of constitutional experiments. In themselves these are most interesting, and some indicate great political sagacity on the part of their authors. But all were short-lived, and their chief effect was to drive the nation back to the old order. All the time the Independents were growing more and more un-

popular ; while as each attempt to establish a settled government caused a fresh breach in their ranks, they were continually becoming weaker. Cromwell's treatment of the Rump alienated many of his previous supporters. Next he tried to work with a party who wished to inaugurate the rule of Christ and His saints—that is to say, themselves ; but a so-called Parliament of spiritual experts proved so factious and impractical that Cromwell seized the first pretext for getting rid of them. As the Saints now considered him to be the Beast of the Apocalypse, he turned to his own officers. They drew up a scheme called the "Instrument of Government." Cromwell was to be Lord Protector for life, with a fixed minimum revenue and very great administrative powers. There was to be one House of Parliament, representing Scotland and Ireland as well as England ; the franchise was extended, and seats were re-distributed according to the density of the population.

In its broad outlines the "Instrument" looked distinctly democratic. In effect it proved the very reverse. To begin with, no one who had fought for the king was allowed to vote. Then, when a Parliament met, the Protector and his council were allowed to exclude members whom they considered unfit. Even after these precautions Cromwell had much trouble with the first Parliament that assembled while the "Instrument" was in force, and it was dissolved without achieving anything of value. For about three years, in fact, Cromwell ruled as a despot.

Cromwell was a great and high-minded man, and on the whole wielded his power with admirable wisdom. At home he tried to complete the reforms begun by the Rump. He succeeded in effecting some much-needed changes in the legal system. His social measures, though not always successful, were excellent in their intentions, and his treatment of the licensing question and support of education reveal an enlightenment far in advance of his time. He tried hard to apply the

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principle of religious toleration. Disregarding the prejudices of most Independents, the "Instrument" had authorised the establishment of a State Church. Cromwell made it as comprehensive as he could: Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists were alike eligible for the ministry. As for those who must remain outside, there was to be liberty of worship for all, except such as held views dangerous to the Government. Unfortunately, Romanists and Anglicans—a majority of the nation—came under this head; but Cromwell, more tolerant than the "Instrument" itself, allowed them to exercise their religion in private so long as they did not abuse his forbearance by forming plots.

Abroad Cromwell was as energetic as at home and more successful. He was the first great Imperialist statesman in English history. Whereas the Stuarts had shown little concern for the colonies in North America, Cromwell followed the statesmen of the Commonwealth in seeking to strengthen their connection with the mother-country, and went further by striving to increase English territory and commerce through conquest. An expedition to the West Indies captured Jamaica, and involved England in war with Spain. Cromwell made an alliance with France; English troops fought with great honour in the French armies on the Continent; and at sea Blake performed some of the most dazzling exploits in the records of our navy. The Protector, in short, once more made England a first-class power. After the Restoration, when his name was held in general hatred, men still remembered with admiration "what brave things he did" and how "he made all the neighbour princes fear him."

Nevertheless Cromwell's rule was intensely unpopular. Anglicans and Presbyterians would have hated it whatever he did. Those who had no strong political or religious convictions resented his attempts to enforce the Puritan code of morality. And every one outside the army loathed government by the sword. The Protector, indeed, made little effort to conceal the fact

that his rule was a military despotism. He divided the country into districts under the control of major-generals, who were to put down disaffection and enforce the new laws. The "Instrument" had given the Protector considerable powers of legislation; but Cromwell, going beyond these, levied taxes on his sole authority and even had persons suspected of sedition imprisoned without trial. Though widely different in its aims, Cromwell's rule was in its methods much the same as that system of "Thorough" which Charles and Strafford had tried to establish.

The general discontent soon compelled a change. In 1656 the fierce criticisms of Parliament first forced Cromwell to withdraw the major-generals, and then destroyed the "Instrument" altogether. The Protector accepted a constitution embodied by the House in a document called the Humble Petition and Advice. It was the work of those who, while opposed to military rule, still had confidence in Cromwell. There were now to be two Houses of Parliament, the members of the second chamber being nominated for life by the Protector. Cromwell himself, who rejected the proffered title of king, gained in dignity, but lost his arbitrary powers. The new experiment, however, was disliked by the army, and raised as many grievances as it allayed. But before it could be given a fair trial, the death of the Protector in September 1658 threw everything into confusion.

Though few people realised it, Cromwell's death made inevitable the restoration of the monarchy. Only his strong personality had kept the Independent party from complete disintegration. His son Richard, who succeeded to the Protectorate, was a man of weak character, and small military experience, and, becoming involved in a quarrel with the army, he soon resigned his office. Then followed a year of chaos. The soldiers tried the expedient of restoring the Rump; soon they turned it out again; then they let it meet once more. At last the army fell to pieces like so many parties of

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recent years. General Monk, who commanded the forces in Scotland, marched southwards, and after overcoming a feeble attempt at resistance, announced that he was in favour of a free Parliament. A general election returned an overwhelming majority of Royalists. The exiled Charles adroitly promised to leave the settlement of everything to Parliament. He was invited to return, and on May 29, 1660, he made his entry into London.

CHAPTER VII

THE ROYALIST REACTION

THE Restoration of the monarchy was received with extravagant joy by all save the Independents. Nevertheless it was advisable for Charles to walk warily. His return would have been impossible but for the support of the Presbyterians, and they commanded a majority in the Parliament then sitting. The king saw that the Cavaliers would have to forgo their expected revenge. Fourteen conspicuous Roundheads were executed, and a few more imprisoned; but apart from these all who had opposed the Crown received full pardon. In the same spirit, while estates confiscated by Parliament or the Protector were restored, the Cavaliers were given no compensation for the heavy losses which most of them had incurred in other ways.

But though the Puritans generally kept their lives and goods, they lost their religious liberty. The Independents indeed expected nothing else. But Charles had promised to agree to any suggestions of Parliament for securing liberty to tender consciences; and it was commonly believed that he wished to establish a Church to which both Anglicans and Presbyterians might conform. In reality his gratitude to the old Church of England for its unswerving loyalty, together with personal and political objections to Presbyterianism, had fixed him in a resolve to restore the Elizabethan settlement. The question of religion was accordingly postponed till a general election had returned to a new Parliament a strong majority of uncompromising

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Cavaliers. The Church was speedily restored to its old footing; a drastic Act of Uniformity drove twelve hundred Puritan clergymen from their livings; and subsequent measures imposed severe restrictions on Nonconformist ministers, and severe penalties on those who held or attended Nonconformist services. Unpopular, demoralised, and divided, the Puritans could do nothing to ward off their fate.

The Restoration undid all the constitutional and ecclesiastical reforms introduced since 1641. But the work of the first session of the Long Parliament was left untouched. Conflict between the Crown and the nation was still to come, but it turned on other questions than unparliamentary taxation and illegal courts of justice.

The reaction against Puritan politics was moderate as compared with the reaction against Puritan morals and religion. While the first part of the century saw the influence of religion at its height, the Restoration period is notorious for its profligacy. In the days of Charles I the leaders on both sides were mostly disinterested and high-principled men; in the days of his son politicians were self-seeking and unscrupulous, and were expected to be so. Ecclesiastical problems continue to play a great part in politics, but religious conviction exerts an ever-diminishing influence on conduct. Pepys tells how he went one Sunday to a tavern with a Mr. Creed, "who twelve months ago might have been got to hang himself almost as soon as go to a drinking-house on a Sunday." If poor Creed fell from grace so quickly, if the once strict Pepys could himself launch into rhapsodies about the most profligate of the king's mistresses, little self-restraint could be expected from those who had never professed puritanical principles.

There was, it is true, some compensation for this widespread degeneracy. The decline of religious enthusiasm carried with it the decline of bigotry. As interest in theology became less absorbing, men turned their minds to other fields, and the period saw great advances

in scientific and philosophical speculation. Superficially society was cultured and intellectual, and this may carry weight with those who hold with Burke that vice divested of grossness loses half its evil. But half its vice is more than enough to damn the age of the Restoration.

The fashion in virtue and vice was to a great extent set by the king. And the influence of his character on private morality was equalled by its influence on politics. Charles had the personal grace of his father and the shrewdness of James I, together with a tact and penetration which had belonged to neither. And since, like them, he wished to make himself absolute, it might seem as if English liberty was in grave danger. But Charles was of a facile, indolent disposition, inclined to the line of least resistance, and while he clung tenaciously to his aims, opposition soon caused his withdrawal from any particular attempt at realising them. His father's fate and his own misfortunes were ever before his mind, and he was resolved not to end his days on the scaffold or in exile. Still, the suicidal loyalty of the Cavalier Parliament of 1661 might have been exploited with success had not Charles taken the very course that would specially irritate it. He had thought it best to restore the Church of England, but so far as he believed in any religion at all, he was himself a Roman Catholic. This preference was reinforced by his mistaken conviction that the Roman faith was the natural ally of absolute monarchy. His first task, then, must be the conversion of England. But the smallest hint of any relaxation of the laws against Romanism at once aroused the bitter hostility of the Cavaliers.

At first there was another obstacle in the king's path. His leading minister was the Earl of Clarendon, who, as Edward Hyde, had helped to lead the opposition to Pym in 1641. Since then he had followed the Stuarts through weal and woe; and his claims on Charles's gratitude united with his vast political experience to give him the first place in the king's counsels. The

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Restoration Settlement was agreeable to his views, and subsequently he was at one with the Cavaliers in devotion to the Church and dislike of concessions to Romanists or Dissenters.

The grave and upright Clarendon was a survival of an earlier age and out of place in the court of Charles. The king soon grew tired of him ; from various motives a coalition of courtiers did all they could to achieve his ruin. A war with the Dutch, which lasted from 1665-1667, proved less successful than had been anticipated. Clarendon was made the scapegoat : he was dismissed from office and impeached by the House of Commons ; and to avoid inconvenient revelations, the king banished him. The poor man retired to France, where he died in 1674.

Clarendon's fall made way for five of the inner circle of Charles's councillors. Such cliques were currently termed cabals ; and the fame which this particular cabal acquired, with the coincidence that the initial letters of the counsellors' names spelt the word, has caused it to be remembered as The Cabal *par excellence*. The five ministers were Sir Thomas Clifford, the Earl of Arlington, the Duke of Buckingham, Lord Ashley, and the Earl of Lauderdale. Lauderdale's attention was principally taken up with Scotland, and he played little part in English politics. Of the others, while Clifford and Arlington shared the king's religious sympathies, Buckingham and Ashley were the official champions of Dissent. The Duke was a brilliant and vicious courtier, whose interest in Nonconformity was derived from his marriage with Fairfax's daughter. Ashley, a much more serious politician, had in his time played many parts. In 1667 he was in favour of a Protestant policy abroad, and of using the royal prerogative to gain toleration for the Dissenters. In foreign affairs Charles seemed at first to fall in with Ashley's views. In secret, however, he soon began to weave one of the most disgraceful schemes of which a king has ever been guilty. Convinced that Parliament was

immovably hostile to Catholic relief, he resolved to turn to Louis XIV of France, who he knew would sympathise with his aims. The outcome was the secret Treaty of Dover, concluded in 1670. Charles undertook to declare himself a Romanist at the first convenient opportunity. The disorder that would ensue was to be put down with the aid of French money and troops. In return, Charles was to assist Louis in a projected attack on the Dutch.

Clifford and Arlington were privy to the whole intrigue; but while Buckingham and Ashley had of course to know of the impending war, Charles dared not tell them of the religious clauses in the treaty. And when it came to the point, he shrank from the uproar which open support of Romanism would arouse. To cloak his real intentions and make himself popular with at least part of his subjects, he issued a Declaration of Indulgence, in which he announced the suspension of all laws against both Nonconformists and Roman Catholics. About the same time war was declared against the Dutch.

Charles's bargain with Louis was an utter failure. The war was not successful, and soon became most unpopular. The Declaration was denounced from the first. The Cavaliers were furious, and the Dissenters themselves saw through the trick. In the parliamentary session of 1673 the Declaration was pronounced illegal, and so threatening was the attitude of the Houses that Charles was advised by Louis to withdraw it. Pressing home their advantage, the Cavaliers next passed the Test Act, whereby all holders of office under the Crown were required to take the Sacrament according to the Anglican rite and to repudiate the doctrine of Transubstantiation. Charles's brother James and Clifford resigned their posts. The Cabal was broken up. To intensify the confusion, Ashley learnt the full truth about the Treaty of Dover. Wrath at having been fooled drove both him and Buckingham into permanent opposition to the Crown.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CONSTITUTIONAL SETTLEMENT

THE change in the attitude of Ashley—or the Earl of Shaftesbury, as he had recently become—marks the beginning of a renewed attack on the Crown, an attack which, though at first repulsed, culminated after fifteen years in the Revolution of 1688. The aims of the new opposition party were in essence the same as those of the Parliamentarians at the outbreak of the Civil War. The character of their leaders, their mental outlook, their arguments, the measures they advocated, were greatly changed. But, like Pym, Shaftesbury wished to make Parliament the motive power of the State. As things were, it might frustrate the King's policy, but could not force him to carry out its own. Another of Shaftesbury's aims was to secure toleration for Non-conformists. A third was to uphold the Protestant interest in Europe. The least worthy, though by no means the least influential, was to advance himself.

Though Shaftesbury was unscrupulous and self-seeking, he has two great claims on the respect of posterity. He rendered powerful and disinterested service to the cause of religious toleration, and he was the first to make a parliamentary party into an efficient political machine.

Shaftesbury's task was desperately hard. The Parliament elected in 1661 was still sitting. By-elections and change of opinion had increased the numbers of those opposed to the court, and it was this section that Shaftesbury organised and led for five years. But his followers were much less numerous than the Cavaliers,

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whose loyalty had been revived by a change in the attitude of Charles. Perceiving that his encouragement of Romanism must for the time be abandoned, he took into favour one of the Cavalier leaders, Sir Thomas Osborne, soon created Earl of Danby. Like his political associates, Danby wished to uphold the Church at home and Protestantism abroad. Accordingly the laws against Dissenters were sternly enforced, and a marriage was arranged between the king's niece Mary and William of Orange, Stadtholder of the Netherlands and the arch-enemy of France. The return of Cavalier devotion to the Crown was accelerated by lavish bribery.

It says much for Shaftesbury's energy and address that he was able to keep any following together. The prospects of the opposition were not, however, as dismal as they looked. For the Charles which Danby showed the Cavaliers was not the real Charles. The real Charles was still in close league with France. To get money from Louis was easier than to get it from Parliament; and as the Commons were hostile to French aims it suited Louis to deprive them of their most powerful weapon. This coincidence of interests led to several secret arrangements, which enabled Charles to prorogue Parliament for long intervals. Danby disliked these intrigues, but deemed it better to acquiesce than to break the harmony between the king and the Cavaliers.

Charles and Danby kept their secret well, and there seemed no reason to apprehend disaster, when, in 1678, a religious earthquake suddenly turned the political world upside down. Titus Oates, a clergyman of versatile faith who had recently professed conversion to Romanism, came forward with a tale about a Jesuit plot to murder the king. Much of his story was a palpable fabrication. But the opposition acutely took the matter up; Oates embellished his tale with corroborative details; other informers added more; and public excitement rose to panic. Parliament passed an

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Act excluding Roman Catholics from both houses, and then turned to consider the position of Charles's brother, James, Duke of York. He was heir-presumptive to the throne and a Romanist. It was generally believed that the plot had been formed in his interests. If such a man were allowed to succeed, it must be with restricted powers. But before the duke's fate could be decided, Louis revealed his recent dealings with Charles and Danby's knowledge of them. His object was to cripple England by provoking a long quarrel between Charles and Parliament. The scheme was successful: Cavalier confidence in Charles was destroyed, and the Commons decided to impeach Danby. The Parliament was thereupon dissolved in the eighteenth year of its age.

Then began a two years' struggle between Charles and Shaftesbury. Numerous executions of alleged conspirators kept alive the dread of Rome, and at three general elections Shaftesbury's party was returned with an overwhelming majority. The king sent Danby to the Tower, banished James to the Continent, and admitted Shaftesbury and his friends to high offices of state. But the opposition leader refused to be diverted from his main object—the exclusion of the Duke of York from the throne.

To this Charles resolutely refused to agree. In his determination to maintain his brother's rights, he was ready to run the greatest risks. One Parliament he summarily dissolved after a short session. Before allowing the next to meet he kept it waiting for a year, while the nation boiled with excitement and the bitterness of rival parties—now nicknamed Whigs and Tories—rose to such a pitch that the gravest statesmen predicted civil war. But there was no civil war; Shaftesbury's power collapsed as suddenly as it had arisen, and the rights of James remained intact.

One reason for Shaftesbury's failure was the lack of unanimity among his Whig followers. Some would have been content with limitations on James's power,

and were averse from excluding him from the throne. Even among those in favour of the latter course there was much disagreement as to who should be substituted, and Shaftesbury alienated many of his supporters by putting forward the Duke of Monmouth, one of the king's illegitimate children, ostensibly on the ground that his mother had been privately married to Charles, but really because Monmouth would always be dependent on the Whigs. In the second place, Shaftesbury's strength was based on the general belief in the Popish Plot, and when this presently began to be shaken a strong revulsion of feeling took place. But of the factors contributing to Shaftesbury's failure none was more influential than the adroitness of the king. His attitude throughout the crisis was a blend of obstinacy and compliance, which, while kindling fierce passion, was not provocative enough to excite actual rebellion. Positively uncanny was the keenness with which Charles noted the first signs of reaction, and equally wonderful the skill with which the *coup de grâce* was prepared. Charles extracted a large sum of money from Louis by pretending to adopt Whig views of foreign policy; then he dissolved a Whig Parliament after a week's session; and, to the general amazement, the Whig leaders were helpless. Shaftesbury soon found it well to flee to Holland, where in 1683 he died. An obscure conspiracy, known as the Rye-House Plot, gave the Government a pretext for executing some of his chief associates; but there was no general vengeance. For the rest of the reign the country remained quiet, and when in 1685 Charles died, he was able to hand over to his brother a loyal realm and an unrestricted prerogative.

Like all the Stuart kings, James II was popular at his accession, and his favour with the nation was increased by the announcement of his intention to uphold the existing constitution in Church and State. His first and only Parliament contained a strong majority of Tories devoted to the Crown. They gave James

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a substantial revenue for life, and eagerly supported him in the suppression of the rebellion of the Duke of Monmouth. That nobleman had crossed from Holland, and, landing in Dorset, had called on all good Protestants to follow him against a popish king. But the rebels were soon defeated, Monmouth was taken and executed, and his supporters met with a fearful retribution, first from the royal army and then from Judge Jeffreys, whose progress through the disaffected counties is deservedly remembered as the Bloody Assize. The hostility of Parliament towards Monmouth certainly reflected the general feeling of the nation.

James had been brilliantly successful, but his success turned his head. He thought himself strong enough to do something for those who shared his faith. As the first suggestion of Catholic relief changed the tone of Parliament, James resolved to gain his end by the royal prerogative.

The Crown had an undoubted right to dispense with the operation of laws in particular cases—a right still exercised, for instance, when a criminal sentenced to death is reprieved. But the exact limits of this prerogative had never been defined; indeed, it had never been systematically used. James now began to employ this weapon to defeat the Test Act and other statutes against Romanism. Roman Catholics were given commissions in the army, admitted to the Privy Council, appointed to important positions at the universities. Papal officials appeared at court. Catholic worship was openly performed in London. Clergymen who refused to lend themselves to James's policy were dealt with by a judicial body which was a virtual revival of the old Court of High Commission. Other protests were confidently left to the subservient bench of judges. When London became restive James encamped 16,000 troops at Hounslow.

But to be of lasting value Catholic relief must have a wider and firmer foundation than the personal favour of James to individual Romanists. The king, how-

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ever, realised the unwisdom of introducing general measures in the teeth of the whole nation, and, like his brother before him, sought to counterbalance the hostility of the Anglicans by winning the support of the Dissenters. In 1687 he therefore asserted that the Crown had the power of entirely suspending any law, and issued a Declaration of Indulgence which bestowed liberty of worship on all. Most Nonconformists, however, denounced the concession as illegal; and to make his prospects worse, James, by multiplying his favours to Roman Catholics and almost ignoring Dissenters, soon destroyed any belief in his impartiality. The temper of the nation was already ugly, when in 1688 the unexpected birth of an heir to the throne shook the loyalty of those who had been content to wait for the succession of James's Protestant daughter Mary. About the same time the king ordered that the Declaration should be publicly read in all churches. Seven bishops, headed by the primate, petitioned to be excused, and were straightway charged with publishing a seditious libel. Their trial raised public excitement to fever heat; and the joy when they were acquitted showed how intense and universal was antagonism to James.

The king's arbitrary conduct had actually brought about an alliance between the Whigs and the Tories. The Tory theory of the wickedness of all resistance to the Crown gave way before Tory devotion to the Church. But in the face of James's army, it was necessary to look for help from abroad, and, fortunately for the malcontents, there was in William of Orange a foreign prince able and willing to intervene, a prince too with a Stuart mother and a Stuart wife. The birth of James's son and the treatment of the bishops stirred to action the leaders of the disaffected coalition, and a letter signed by four conspicuous Whigs and three Tories invited William to England. It was not intended to depose James. With the aid of the Dutch forces, the opposition party would impose their own terms on him; and William would have his reward by securing

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the succession for his wife, and by the control he would gain over England's foreign policy.

Though James had ample warning of the impending blow, he unaccountably neglected to provide against it; and when a Dutch army at last landed in Devon, he showed a lack of resolution which soon drove all waverers into the invader's camp. Next, by fleeing to France, he played straight into William's hands. The Prince was now the only barrier between the nation and anarchy. With studied moderation he referred the settlement of everything to a parliamentary assembly, but when the so-called Convention met, it became clear, notwithstanding the opposition of the Tories, that William would have to be made king. It was resolved that by his illegal actions and his flight to France James had "abdicated the government." A Declaration of Right which was passed by the Houses denied the right of the Crown to suspend laws, condemned James's use of the dispensing power, enjoined the frequent summons of Parliament, and declared illegal the maintenance of a standing army without parliamentary sanction. On accepting the Declaration William and Mary were proclaimed king and queen.

As usual political changes were accompanied by an attempt to solve the religious problem. Whigs and Tories were at one in imposing fresh restrictions on the Roman Catholics. The Nonconformists, however, received their reward for refusing the tempting bait of James. A Toleration Act made it lawful for nearly all Protestant Dissenters to worship as they pleased, and though in theory still excluded from civil and municipal office, they soon found means of evading the law and putting themselves in these respects on a practical equality with their fellow-citizens in the Church of England.

The religious aspect of the Revolution has been too much overlooked. For a hundred and fifty years the course of English history had been in great measure determined by religious controversy; the issue of the

strife was now decided. For the same time efforts had been made to impose on the nation uniformity of faith and worship; that policy was now abandoned. The Puritans had failed in that the Elizabethan settlement remained the established form of religion: they had succeeded in that the principle of religious toleration, however imperfectly applied, was at last recognised by the State. Henceforth Church history and political history flow in divergent channels.

But it is right to remember the Revolution chiefly as the decisive victory of Parliament in its Hundred Years' War with the Crown. The mere deposition of James was an object-lesson which no future king could ignore. The Declaration of Right rendered Parliament incontestably supreme in the spheres of legislation and finance. And though on paper the king still governed his realm and decided its relations with foreign states, it soon became clear that if England was to hold her own in the international struggle for existence and expansion, Parliament must be allowed to make and unmake ministries and determine national policy.

The Revolution did not establish democracy. Parliament was then an oligarchy and elected by an oligarchy. For all that a seventeenth century Parliament was generally an index of the national will. On the main points at issue it was as well fitted as a democratic assembly to fight the battles of the people. And, despite the personal unpopularity of William, it is evident that the constitutional settlement of 1689 owed its permanence to the fact that it was generally acceptable to the nation. In this sense the Revolution may be called a victory for the people. The monarchy had nursed the lion cub, and now it had turned and rent its master.

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There are many interesting and short biographies. Particular reference may be made to J. Gairdner's

Henry VII (Twelve English Statesmen series), Mandell Creighton's *Wolsey* (Twelve English Statesmen) and *Queen Elizabeth*, A. F. Pollard's *Henry VIII* and *Cranmer*, Julian Corbet's *Drake* (English Men of Action), and H. D. Traill's *Strafford* (Twelve English Statesmen). Books on Oliver Cromwell are of course innumerable. Lord Morley's biography is extremely interesting and suggestive, and of the highest value is Prof. C. H. Firth's volume in the "Heroes of the Nations" series.

Of works written during the period many may be read with interest and profit by the general reader. Specially instructive are More's *Utopia* and Roper's *Life of its author*, Cavendish's *Life and Death of Thomas Wolsey*, the *Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson*, and the *Diaries* of John Evelyn and Samuel Pepys. Carlyle's *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* may be mentioned under this head, as the historical value of the book consists in the original documents.

Readers interested in constitutional questions will find much of value in Pollard's *Factors in Modern History* and Maitland's *Constitutional History of England*; and for economic matters W. Cunningham's *Growth of English Industry and Commerce* may be consulted.

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